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# Pages in Waiting

by

James Milne

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Milne

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## A WORD OF PREFACE

DEAR BRITISH PUBLIC,

May be these greetings will not reach you, because the flight of a new book is never straight and sure, like the flight of an eagle. Especially is this so when essays are concerned, for the essay is the *Cinderella* of the British book world, worthy and virtuous, perhaps, but rather neglected by the masses.

The general reader, a mighty fine fellow, has an odd disregard for brevity in writing, as we see also in the case of the short story. He likes his books long drawn out, the continuation tale, because he hates the mental or emotional disturbance of beginnings and endings and a string of new subjects. "Don't disturb me," he says; "please don't!"

But, curiously enough, he is fond of the paragraph in his newspaper and he may be seen dexterously hunting it among the ham and eggs, the toast and the marmalade of the British breakfast table. Might this very proper taste for the short-and-sweet in journalism not be extended to include miscellanies, anyhow when they come out of Fleet Street, like the present lot?

They all began there, where so much ends, because Fleet Street is the anchorage from which

half the writing people of the country swing. Perhaps they are patronised a little by the other half who write only for Eternity and the Publishers, but they have learned to grin and endure. Even so, they need bravery to gather together, possibly from years of Fleet Street effort, a few things which seem to them good, either by the accident of their subjects, or the mood of their presentation.

Printed in some powerful daily paper, in some well-known weekly, or in some magazine which is a household word! Certainly, and the general advertisement is so good, and the courtesy of editors so great, that there is really no need to name organs individually. Often novels sail into print first as prosperous serials, though that is not mentioned in the later book. Why should there be any difference in the reader's attitude towards writings of actuality and writings of the imagination?

Surely the right view is that creative work of any sort, which has survived a trial run, is thereby recommended, for that is a law of the world about a quack medicine, or a soft drink, a brand of bully-beef, or a fire extinguisher. At least a Fleet Street origin need not be damned—even with faint praise! —and that gentle plea being made, these various greetings are now, Dear British Public, confided to you by—

Yours sincerely,  
THE AUTHOR.

Fleet Street, London.  
October, 1926.

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To my Good Friend and Good Doctor,  
EUGENE M. NIALL, who always understands



I

HEROINES AND HERO WORSHIP



# THE HEROINE OF TO-DAY



# PAGES IN WAITING

## I

### THE HEROINE OF TO-DAY

THE trouble about the heroine of to-day is that she refuses to worship the hero one little bit, and all this makes her case difficult. What is a novelist to do about a girl who says to her best young man, "Never mind, Old Bean ! I'll put it right."

"Old Bean !" The words creak drily like something that has been, and is no more, a ghost of yesterday. They have neither a salutation nor a gesture, neither the velvet of a hand-touch, nor the sweetness of a stolen look. Simply they are a banal familiarity, alien to all the softnesses which should belong to the dream-world of sex.

It is not so much what we say, or do, but how we say or do it, that tips the balance, when the delicate humanities are concerned. You can always travel in hope but, after all, the thing is to arrive, anyhow, once in a while. Now, the

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modern heroine does contrive to arrive, because she is so capable in managing the small problems which make the greater slice of life ; and that should be frankly conceded to her. But it is just this capacity, this readiness to face almost every possibility and see it through, that plays the deuce with any mere man who has to do with our heroine, because she leaves him no secret, open doors.

It may be trouble with parents about late hours at some vague night-club, or it may be “joy-riding” to the danger of the morning milkman. Our little ladyship takes hold of the business and, hey, presto ! it goes right, as easily as a juggler’s trick. It may be a fall-out between two cavaliers as to who, definitely, shall have her smiles, her affections, and her errant company. She settles the honours evenly and has the tourney continue until she becomes tired of it. The problem which calls her may be as practical as a saddle-strap grown slack in the hunting-field, or a car that “back-fires” on the road. She tackles it, solves it, and merely says, “ Now, Old Bean, that’s that.”

When a heroine is so uncannily capable, she leaves nothing for Young Lochinvar to do and he, let it be admitted, does the nothing very agreeably. He may be thirty, but still he is

## THE HEROINE OF TO-DAY

only a "boy," while his sister, at twenty, is a woman of the world. What she does not know can scarcely be worth knowing, and if she wants to do a thing she does it and leaves it to other people to say "Why?" After all, you could spend a whole life saying "Whys" and asking "Wheresofores," and there is a real philosophy in the new maxim, "Hold your tongue and sail ahead." Young women don't chatter so much as their mothers and grandmothers did, when they were young, but they do speak well, having something to say.

"The modern girl," a popular English novelist said to me recently, "has stood for many bad hours in my work, but I'm getting to understand her. She's a perfectly genuine creature, and, having courage, she sees no reason why she should be artificial and beat about bushes of any sort. Therefore she bobs her hair, because it looks pretty and is easily kept. She wears her frocks short because she thinks them attractive that way, and because they let her walk freely. She takes a cigarette from you and smokes it in your face because she and you both like that, and she uses a lip-stick and thinks nothing about it."

Of old manly heroes thronged on the "vapours" and other womanly weaknesses of heroines, but

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now they must learn to thrive on their virtues and strengths or give the thing up. Once upon a time the hero called the play, but now-a-days the heroine does so before he knows where he is. She makes a companionable sweetheart, she is a wife who sees that the house is right, and when the time comes, probably later rather than earlier, she shows herself a sensible and attentive mother. Oh, yes, the heroine of to-day has more all-roundness than any heroine of any other day, and that summing-up is just where she gives "beans," as she would herself say, to the poor novel writer.

He looks at her with his eyes and says that, apparently, she wears no clothes, although, indeed, she is charmingly and healthfully dressed. He looks at her with his mind and says that, apparently also, she wears no characteristics, although, as we have discovered, she has lots of modern character. Then he flings up his hands and cries, "There's nothing to write about her, no crinolines, no hysterics, nothing feminine at all, in the ancient manner, so what am I to do ?" He does write something, but it may not be very inseeing, or very wise, or very true, and certainly it does not greatly assist the ripening of the modern heroine, for that is what she really needs.

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She is like a flower that has come up in a quick sun and she has not, as yet, all the possessions for perfection's sacred height. She is the advance-guard of a type which will reach its maturity in another decade, when a too aggressive note of modernity has softened into the gentle, caressing folds of beautiful womanhood. Nothing that is worthy grows in a day or a week, a month or a year, and the heroine of our time is only on the footsteps of the throne made for her.

She shivers beside its cold marble, but tosses her head confidently to proclaim that she doesn't shiver, and is quite comfortable and at ease, thank you ! By and by reverence will come to her, as it is coming to the whole womanhood of the North American Continent, through the French-Canadian girl educated in a convent.

Then we shall all rise up and call her blessed, and what more lovely salute could any heroine desire ?



# SIR HARRY LAUDER'S BURNS



## II

### SIR HARRY LAUDER'S BURNS

“That I, for puir auld Scotland’s sake,  
Some useful plan or book might make,  
Or sing a sang at least !”

SO wrote Robert Burns, and so whispered Harry Lauder to himself, long ago, while he was still “unhonoured and unsung.” Burns sang a Scottish song for all time, and it has its modern echo in Harry Lauder, the pure Scot, from the kindly twinkle in his eye, to the beaded cloth slippers on his feet.

A “mornin’ wi’ Burns” and Harry Lauder ! For you must know that Sir Harry Lauder has put his thoughts about the Scottish national poet into writing, which may one day make a book, a modest little book, bountiful of human nature. He had promised me a few glimpses into this treasure-house of Burns notes, and when he had lit his pipe he began to keep his word.

“Aye,” he said, as if he were not saying anything but just talking into the mists of the past. “Aye, I consider myself a relative of Burns,

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inasmuch as I have the same independent Scottish mind, the same Scottish sentiment, and the same patriotism. I owe everything to my country, and my country owes everything to Burns, and that is the larger reason why I regard myself as a relative, one of the same family, many decades behind, but still proud of the passion, proud of the tradition. I have lain in my bed and I have sat in my study and fancied I was walking down the road with Burns. I could, in my fancy, see him, I could speak with him—nay, I could feel him put his hand on my shoulder and say :

“ ‘ I love a lassie, a bonnie, bonnie lassie,  
She’s as pure as the lily in the dell,  
She’s as sweet as the heather, the bonnie, purple  
heather,  
Mary, my Scottish blue bell ! ’ ”

That is Harry Lauder’s Robert Burns, an abiding presence, a human being, frail and sweetly lovable, a man of moods with the song of a prophet and the soul of a redeemer—Lauder’s Burns ! You could see that he was felt, talked with, consulted, lived with, rejoiced in, that he was a holy inspiration—Lauder’s Burns !

“ To me,” said Sir Harry dreamily, “ the name of Robert Burns is sacred. Poor Rabbie, so natural that he never tried to hide his weaknesses !

## SIR HARRY LAUDER'S BURNS

My religion is, Let us bury all the bad bits in the life of genius and for ever remember the good work. 'To err is human, to forgive divine.' At the rate of progress in which we have lived, the simple-minded and natural man has been called ignorant. What a fallacy ! I have wandered far over this world, and the best, the finest people I have met are the simplest and plainest, folk God-fearing and honest as the day is long. Did any man ever love more seriously, more tenderly than Burns in the great way ? Listen to this for an expression of love :

“ ‘ The Powers aboon can only ken  
(To whom the heart is seen)  
That nane can be sae dear to me  
As my sweet lovely Jean.’ ”

Sir Harry Lauder looked up from the thick, closely written notebook which is his Burns depository, and his eyes had the suspicion of a tear. It would have mastered him and fallen if his look had stayed for another instant on the near photographs of Captain John Lauder, who gladly gave himself in the Great War, and his mother.

“ Burns’s works are eternal,” he resumed. “ His words will live for ever. I make bold to say his memory is celebrated by more men,

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in Burns Societies and kindred bodies, than that of any other man who ever lived, excepting Jesus Christ. No other man, King or Commoner, has more monuments, the world over, to his name than Robert Burns. Justly, for he lifted his nation on to a pedestal, made it great in song and story. ‘*Tam O’ Shanter*’ is matchless. The ‘*Cottar’s Saturday Night*’ is a domestic star that will shine for ever. His beautiful songs will be sung as long as the burn wimples to the sea and the bonnie, red heather blooms on the hills of Caledonia.”

When Sir Harry Lauder next spoke, after turning among the leaves of his notebook, there was a stronger, less tender sound in his voice. Somehow it sent one’s mind to “*Holy Willie’s Prayer*,” Burns’s famous scourge of the “*unco’ guid*,” and that instinct of association proved right.

“ I have,” he said, “ read criticisms of the life of Burns which give the reader a dinner of dirty dish-water. There would follow some dutiful verse, and you were expected to relish it. But how could you, with the nasty taste in your mouth. The kindly soul of Burns had pity at all times. The only person to whom he was ever unkind was himself. His tragedy was his neglect of himself. When we see a man neglect himself,

## SIR HARRY LAUDER'S BURNS

let us give him sympathy. Burns tried to do two things at once : to farm and write poetry. At farming he failed ; he made himself immortal ! His profound heart-wish was to sing a song for Scotia's sake," and, saying that, Sir Harry Lauder lilted, in his moving and melodious voice, the familiar lines wherein Burns expressed this prayer.

" An honest man was Burns," he read, dipping again into that notebook, " and an ' honest man's the noblest work of God.' I can picture Burns in the field, at the plough, or the harrow, or walking at his horse's head along a country road. He might be riding on top of his cart-load and he would never belabour his horse. I can see him in innocent conversation with his horse or his dog ; trudgin' hame at nicht wi' the crows ; gettin' his bowl o' brose, his cup o' tea, and his bannock of butter ; toshin' himself up for the evenin' ; settin' out for a quiet walk ; feastin' on the pleasures of the day's observations, and pennin' his everlastin' lines :

“ ‘ Had we never lov'd sae kindly,  
Had we never lov'd sae blindly,  
Never met or never parted,  
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.’ ”

Here Sir Harry Lauder lingered for a moment

## PAGES IN WAITING

to speak of the infinite tenderness of that verse, as conveying the stroke of Fate when a man and woman turn, on the highroad of romance, into the valley of tragedy. We put beside it Browning's lines in the same tune, "How sad and bad and mad it was, But then, how it was sweet" ; and Sir Harry Lauder was all for Burns as the deeper plumber of the heart, the sweeter singer of what only genius dare sing.

"To all outward appearance," he took up his appreciation of the Scottish bard, "Burns led an aimless life. That was not his fault ; it was his nature. There are propelling forces over which we have no control. When the wind blows it lashes the seas ; the works of Nature are mysterious. We are poor, weak mortals, and must submit. Burns was one of us, a human craft in a gale. His constant struggle against the tide oft-times churned his kindly feelings into a wrathful whirlpool. Did Burns waste his time ? No ! He loved his country, he cherished her manners, he devoted his all to her national character. He spent his life resuscitating her dying customs, he gathered them together bit by bit. He revived the legends of bygone days, he welded them into a solid substance, he carved out his models in the simple rock of endurance, he left us a harvest that shall surely stand as long

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as the wide Atlantic beats on the boulders of our rugged shores.

“ Burns was a sentimentalist. Let me explain. My test and definition of a sentimentalist is sincerity. He was always sincere. His sincerity was his success. His sincerity made him anxious at all times to speak the truth. His truthfulness created a sensitiveness over which he had no control. It made him discontented. His discontent made him miserable. He was intensely human, therefore he suffered enormously in the world. He never courted pity. His nature was independent. His independence made him grave. He was a fearless, outspoken critic. His honesty was never questioned, he believed what he said, and never said what he did not believe. ‘A man’s a man for a’ that.’ ”

Lastly, Sir Harry Lauder picked from his notebook a passage where he spoke of Burns and the supreme things, the things that link this world and the next, the things that matter most, because, while we come and go, they are the elements of eternity.

“ I am convinced,” he read, “ that Robert Burns often thought about death, and that it pained him mortally, while he surveyed the beauties of the landscape, listened to the laverock, admired the hills and valleys of his beloved Scotia,

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to realize that one day his eyes would be dimmed in death, and that he would no more feast on these sequestered scenes. And he would pray inwardly, faithfully :

“ ‘ ‘ Where with intention I have err’d,  
No other plea I have,  
But Thou art good ; and Goodness still  
Delighteth to forgive.’ ”

“ Amen,” said Sir Harry Lauder, and closed his book.

## A POET OF YESTER-YEAR



### III

#### A POET OF YESTER-YEAR

WHAT, would you say, has been the most difficult moment of your life? You would say that there have been many difficult moments, that they have all been different in their difficulty, and that, therefore, it is not easy to answer the question.

Well, then, let us say the most dramatic, or the most embarrassing, the most harassing or the most anxious moment of your life? That lessens and tightens the choice, and just as a beautiful woman said of her beauty, "Yes, we all have our moments," so, also, we all have those of drama and embarrassment, of harassment and anxiety.

Perhaps if I said "worst moment," I might get still nearer what is meant, and I think mine was when I had to speak a word over the coffin of Gerald Massey, the poet, before it was laid in a churchyard on a hill not far from London Town.

No, I couldn't do it, I told his daughter,

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when she asked me, and I still said no when she begged me, for it seemed a very high undertaking. A sensitive man hates to speak the public word, though I have noticed that when he nerves himself to the ordeal, his message and his deliverance are better than those of the insensitive man. Naturally, because he speaks with his spiritual being as well as with his mind, and so there is personality.

Wouldn't I do it? Gerald Massey's friends and contemporaries had nearly all passed away. He had lived into a generation which scarcely knew him as the mid-Victorian poet, singing lyrics and liberty. He had long ceased to be the poet, and had become a deep student of Egyptology, a far more important mission, as he thought. The silent singer should not be let go silently to the grave—wouldn't I say, over it, what Gerald Massey had been among the English people, what he was, and what, perhaps, he would remain?

While she spoke thus, his daughter put her hand reverently on the head of his coffin, in the little house they occupied not far from the Crystal Palace. How could I say "No" any more, and a day later I made that farewell speech. What I said I never could remember, though the company at the burial assured me it was the fit

## A POET OF YESTER-YEAR

word. May be, because in such a tense minute it is not the word or the thought which counts, so much as the feeling ; sympathy, understanding, the uniting of hearts into a sincere “ hail and farewell.”

Gerald Massey’s pen abides with me, a token of that afternoon and of other times I had spent with him. It is a stout, stubby pen, unusual altogether, like the man himself, even gnarled with use, as he was gnarled with age—for when he died he had nearly counted fourscore years and ten. But he was never old, apart from the frailties which time loads upon the body, and his blue eyes shone with the light of life.

Could I describe him further for you ? Not easily, because he had the mystery which is characteristic of all unusual spirits. They are different from the others, from the ordinary others, and are just themselves. Gerald Massey was essentially himself and yet essentially of the people, the English people. He had their characteristics, simplicity, endurance, faith, and he had proved that a thousand times. But he was English individualized, as you might put it, and this came out markedly in his conversation, which was plain and forthright, like the English, and yet original and poetic like himself.

“ I had no childhood,” he once told me softly,

## PAGES IN WAITING

speaking of his hard, early days. His young way took him through the valley of the shadow of want and up the hill of weary toil. But he climbed, he climbed, not as many "climbers" climb to-day, who are not Gerald Masseys, but seeking the sun of the heights, and seeking it so that he could proclaim it to others, thanks to the very true gift of poetry with which Providence had endowed him :

" Ah ! 'tis like a tale of olden  
Time, long, long ago ;  
When the world was in its golden  
Prime, and God was Lord below ! "

Those lines, with their far echo of a labour of love, were written by Massey ever so many years since. The years have been many, too, since Walter Savage Landor came upon them in a volume which made him cry out that a new John Keats had come. "Here is such poetry," he wrote, "as Jeffrey would have tossed aside with derision and as Gifford would have torn to pieces in despair. Can anything more or better be said of it." There was one in the literary eye for the famous "Edinburgh Reviewers," whom Byron turned on in a famous poem.

You could see, looking into the seared and seer-like face of old Gerald Massey, that young

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Gerald Massey had sung because he must, with pathos and love, with beauty and colour in his verse. He became the Laureate of the Chartist times, and, said John Ruskin, "your poems have been a helpful and precious gift to the working-classes," and "few national services can be greater than that which you have rendered."

But I was never very successful in getting the old Gerald Massey, the Egyptologist, to talk about young and middle-aged Gerald Massey, the poet. He had put aside the lyre for the torch of the Egyptologist, hoping to illuminate the history of mankind from its beginnings in ancient Egypt, to him the storied cradle of the world. Of that he would talk, but then he talked so deeply that you were at once floundering in waters where you could not swim, or even float. Often I have thought, "Would that Massey had lived until the discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb. Here would have been a treasury of the light for which he dug so long and ardently."

Yes, whenever I saw him, his eager face and his velvet skull-cap were buried in Egyptian hieroglyphics. But he would leave them to gossip and to look out from his London windows on green trees. They spoke to him of the country, of his dainty Berkshire itself, and recalled the rural scenes amid which he was bred. He

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had piped to Nature in many a verse, as Pan might himself, and Nature remained his friend, his comrade, to the end.

Thus the old Massey immersed, perhaps even lost, in ancient Egypt, never quite got away from the earlier Massey, an undoubtedly sweet soloist in the choir of our Victorian poets. The salute of recognition had come from low and high, the darger in his ditch and the statesman and the novelist. Mazzini, Garibaldi, Kossuth, or, again, George Eliot, Robert Browning, and Alfred, Lord Tennyson—he knew them all ; but he wondered if he had kept their letters ? Perhaps not.

He recalled for me a talk he had on some occasion with Tennyson about Spiritualism, a faith with the one, as a strain of it has been read into the “ *In Memoriam* ” of the other. He had “ plumbed the void of death ” and was as calmly sure of it as he was of the poetic qualities of Browning, whom he helped to proclaim at the market-cross of fame. You will find Gerald Massey gently portrayed by “ George Eliot ” in ‘ *Felix Holt*, ’ and that had not displeased him. Nor, even when he became the self-centred Egyptologist, could he have regretted any influence his poems may have had on other writers.

His clinking ballad of “ *Sir Richard Greville’s*

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“Last Fight,” on the “little ship *Revenge*,” is a fit companion to Tennyson’s on the same subject, which came after it. “I am English to the heart roots,” said Massey, and we read that into a verse from his “*Sea Kings*” :

“We have fed the Sea with English souls,  
And every mounded wave  
To Heaven bears witness, as it rolls,  
Some Englishman’s grave !”

“Our Rivers carry heroic dust  
For burial in the sea,  
Which helps to keep our noble dust  
And battles for the Free.”

A great idea, if not great poetry, for Gerald Massey was the singer who sang like branches in the wind. One thinks of a later poet and turns to Rudyard Kipling’s haunting “*Song of the Dead*” :

“We have fed our sea for a thousand years,  
And she calls us, still unfed,  
Though there’s never a wave of all her waves  
But marks our English dead :  
We have strawed our best to the weed’s unrest,  
To the shark and the sheering gull,  
If blood be the price of Admiralty,  
Lore God, we ha’ paid in full.”

By gifts, by achievement, and by a spacious poetic suggestion, Gerald Massey was easily

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among the genuine poets of the Victorian era. That was so, even if we estimate him strictly in words which I heard him use, for as Egyptologist he could speak of the lost poet in himself with a very singular detachment.

“ I think the poems real, as far as they go,” he said, “ but their range is very limited.” His verse might contain the flower, but the fruit of his life, as he regarded it, was to be looked for elsewhere. When he spoke like that you quoted, probably not quite accurately, the saying of Fletcher of Saltoun : “ Give me the writing of a nation’s songs and let who will make its laws.” He looked at you with his innocent, wondering eyes, as much as to say, “ Well, there’s no harm in the saying, but I ceased to write verse because I had a greater task.”

— Call it the sacrifice of a poet by himself, hara-kiri on Mount Olympus, call it mistaken zeal, call it what you like, the deed bestirs one’s thought, especially in this day of many “ hard faces ” and much self-seeking.

“ It was not,” he admitted, “ that I felt the fount and source of song had dried up within or without me. Nor was it owing to any spiritual lassitude, from lack of faith in man or woman either.” No, but “ Instead of nursing ancient delusions, by poetizing misinterpreted mythology,

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I have been strenuously seeking to get rid of them by explanation." Away with the muse, he gave himself the stern marching order, and shoulder the spade of knowledge !

He was amused, telling me so, about a visitor who had called to offer him praise for a poet. " But," quoth he, " it was the Corn-Law rhymer he really wanted, Ebenezer Elliot, and so I would have disappointed him in any case." Ebenezer was a contemporary of Massey, but while they were both writing, one rhymes, the other poetry, he had not attained the larger, more objective outlook of his later life. It bade him prospect for other treasure in his quest after truth, and it was a great thing for any man to make a change like this.

Said young Gerald Massey, " I have only entered the lists ; the race has yet to be run." Old Gerald Massey was saying that as Egyptologist to the last day of his life, but the world was a better world in his age than in his youth. We did, as a human family, make progress, and " one may almost expect to see the time when the writer can earn his living by telling the truth."

So wrote Massey, a little cynically, yet in good faith, when his collected and selected verse, ' My Lyrical Life,' was given to us as a last poetic legacy. My copy of it stands beside Massey's

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pen, a second memoir and relic of him, for it bears the inscription in his large dashing hand : “ From the writer, with the Bard’s kindliest of kind regards.”

You may not find the book, though you call on a dozen booksellers, but students of English verse know it, especially those who love the human associations of that verse. They are strong and dramatic in the case of Gerald Massey, because it was his lot to start life with something of :

“ The spirit that can stand alone  
As a Minority of One :  
Or with the faithful few be found  
Working and waiting till the rest come round.”

He observed to me, modestly, indifferently, that a generation had arisen to whom the ‘ Lyrical Life ’ “ might be as good as MS.” He meant it might be as little known as if it had remained in manuscript, for, after all, if you have ever written poetry you like to think that it is read somehow, somewhere, by somebody. You may turn your back upon your own early self to take a new road, but it is pathetic to think that the old one you have travelled is only known to yourself.

It consoled and comforted Massey, therefore, when a friendly singer, writing of his life and work, linked the two roads, the first and the last, in a burst of song :

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“Behold a Poet who could even forego  
The joy peculiar to the Singer’s soul,  
His pleasant dream of fame, his proffered seat  
Upon the heights to which his spirit soared,  
To dive for treasure where but few could breathe,  
And dredge the old sea-bottoms of the Past.  
Lover of Beauty who gave up all for Truth !

• • • •  
And having wrought through years of sacrifice  
And brought his message to the unwelcoming world  
He, calm, contented, leaves the rest with God.  
As if he recked not, though the Bark were wrecked,  
The treasure being landed safe on shore.”

Now and then the poet stirred in the Egyptologist, though a little uneasily, perhaps, as if the swing of verse had been forgotten. When there was such a stirring you could feel, all the time, that the Egyptologist was rebuking the Poet in his own words :

“’Tis the old story !—ever the blind world  
Knows not its Angel of Deliverance.”

Massey was an angel of deliverance to me one afternoon I had drifted to Norwood and in upon him, for he handed me four unpublished poems, saying “to print them if I liked them.” The silent singer singing again !

Here was an event, and I found that three of the pieces had been written during the South African War and had Massey’s old familiar

## PAGES IN WAITING

patriotic fervour, as in this verse of one called “The Dear Old Land” :

“ I do not worship at the Shrine  
Of Jingo : but I hold  
That love of England is divine  
Even in an age of gold.  
My heart leaps up to England’s call,  
And till my days are done,  
My song is, England first of all—  
Our Old Land Number One.”

Another of the poems had the title “The Empire,” and the opening verse runs :

“ Many have died for the dear old Land :  
We think of them all with pride !  
But these were the flower of a brotherly band  
Who first for the Empire died.  
They have completed our story,  
They shall be foremost in glory,  
Who for the Empire died.”

Myself, I liked better a little poem called “Tommy on Spion Kop,” and I said so, and he nodded his grave, grey head, as if meaning, “ So do I.” Judge yourselves, however, for here is the poem :

“ He was but a weed the wind had sown  
In the slums of the poorest poor ;  
A workhouse the only home he had known,  
When his mother dropped dead at the door !

## A POET OF YESTER-YEAR

“ Shot down on the Hill—with a volley of oaths  
    He rose and helplessly tried  
To brush the dirt of the veldt from his clothes :  
    Then with a feeling of pride  
He steadied himself to face his fate,  
    As if answering blow for blow :  
‘ *It's blooming-well good enough, isn't it, mate,*  
    *To die for the Old Land so ? ”*

My chief treasure, however, was the fourth new poem, which Massey had written for his small granddaughter. He had been telling her of the cruel custom of blinding cage-birds with hot wires, in order to make them sing : and then he wrote the poem and called it “ The Lark in London ” :

“ Listen, my little one, it is the lark,  
    Captured and blinded, singing in the dark.  
His nest-mate and his younglings all are dead :  
    Their feathers flutter on some foolish head.  
Of some lost Paradise, poor bird, he sings  
    Which for a moment back his vision brings :  
Wide fields of morning, woods and waterfall :  
    A world of boundless freedom over all.  
He sings of that great glory far away ;  
    He sings his fervid life out, day by day ;  
Imprisoned in an area underground  
    He sings as if all Heaven were listening round.  
He soars in spirit, still divinely strong,  
    And spends each heartbeat in a wave of song,  
Trying to make a little heaven here  
    For others, he who has lost his own, poor dear !

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As if with floods of music he would drown  
The dire, discordant roar of London Town.”

We have the authentic Gerald Massey there, the large heart which warmed English public opinion in his singing-day, the human vision of things, and the easy lilt of the born poet. It was something, in a good friendship with him, to have and to hold such a poem, and to communicate it to others who have not known Gerald Massey either personally, or perhaps in his writings. Well, to them something new is born, like Massey’s “Babe Christabel” :

“ It fell upon a merry May morn,  
All in the prime of that sweet time  
When daisies whiten, woodbines climb,  
The dear Babe Christabel was born.”

JOHN MORLEY, BOOKMAN



## IV

### JOHN MORLEY, BOOKMAN

WE shall get no more books from a most illustrious man of English letters, a great bookman. "Not a word," said Lord Morley, "not a word ; I have finished."

His unwritten books were recited to him, that "Chatham," that "Cavour," perhaps others of an empty, bewitching shelf. He only shook his head, a little sadly, because with a die cast.

But at least there would be another sheaf of the 'Recollections,' bringing them up to a rocking time ? Think with what eagerness they were read in England, in America, everywhere ! No other man's memories, published in the middle of Armageddon, would have sold more than ten thousand copies at home and half as many in cousinly America ! Charming, gratifying, but again it was "Ah, no !" with a smile to sweeten the refusal.

Well, surely there would be a definitive, collected edition of the Morley writings, preferably a pocket edition, such as would hide on a

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bed-head shelf, for the dumb hours of waking which haunt us all ? Charles Dickens went over his writings, licked them together, did his last editing for them and posterity—it was a thing to do ! Again the quiet movement of that fine head, but might it be less resolute ? Did it merely say, “ Not a likely idea ” ; though that also might mean “ No.”

Constantly, Lord Morley got letters from people, all sorts of people, saying how they had enjoyed this, that, or the other page of his writings, or how some essay had helped them over a stile. Somebody wrote from as far away as Kansas to the effect, “ Your chapter so and so in ‘ Rousseau ’ ”—was it the ‘ Rousseau ’ ?—“ made life a different thing for me—thank you ! ” But still “ So to my home in the falling daylight,” was his word of literary farewell.

Who has not read that lovely passage in the ‘ Recollections,’ who has not put it in the archives of the heart as one of the noblest good-byes in English literature ? It is the deliverance of a pilgrim, rich in mind and heart, a pilgrim who had set his feet in precipitous places, and stoutly come through them. It is the farewell of a wandering scholar who had entrance to the “ ancient courts of the men of old,” to the council chambers of modern statesmen, and in both

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spheres has left a name that will live in honour.

The 'Recollections,' like the 'Gladstone,' were written, where Lord Morley finally rested his caravan, on the border of the twin commons of Wimbledon and Putney, a delectable region known to his friend of other years, Algernon Charles Swinburne. His home, simple, restful, lit with the refinement of his usage, made him, with its generous treasury of chosen books, the master of a very fair realm. The years had been many to him, but also they had been few, for, if his figure must bear them, his intellectual activity said them nay.

Some observer declared of Lord Morley, before he left the House of Commons, that his face, especially in profile, bore a certain resemblance to that of Goethe. It might at a distance, just the general contour, but near by you saw its exquisite delicacy of line, its tender blend of a golden heart warming a golden intellect, its radiance of charity and humour, and you said to yourself, "It is the face of none but John Morley, English John Morley, an English face, ripe like an English landscape in a westering sun."

The lift in the eye, its very bashful confusion over personal attentions, its steady light, soft but clear ; what were these but the personality of the

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Morley writings, a sweet “ Come hither ! ” of the eye, as of the pen, a gleam that inspired, consoled, did us all good. The whole man, ascetic but elegant, simple but richly dight in intellectual colour, passed naturally, easily into his writings, as you saw him in the peace of these. The scholarly stoop that had grown in him might be found in them, the same easy playfulness, as when he said, “ There’s as much vanity in plain John as in John, Viscount.”

As commoner or peer he had hitched his waggon to a star, and by that comradeship he abode in the Indian summer of his life—a spirit whose lamp age did not dim, only refined. His speech, measured in note and word, was a melodious token of this, and who would not have been a listener ? There was the stateliness of the sonnet in his talk, as, again, that is present in his writings. Never, however, in these affairs of personality and letters, can we better the French saying, “ The style is the man.” The austerity of truth—this is the Morley gospel, but it is the truth exhilarating. Its mental probing for ultimate reason in things is the work of a large heart. The library of his ‘ Penserozo,’ his “ Thoughtful,” a statuette with a story, had a ruddier air than the chamber of John Milton’s ‘ Il Penserozo ’ :

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“Where glowing embers through the room  
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom.”

His was not a library with a “high embowed roof,” nor “antick pillars massy proof,” neither had it “storied windows”; because when he took to Wimbledon he had it built for himself. It was a temple of peace, but not as Gladstone’s Temple of Peace, which he knew full well, at Hawarden. Its note was one of public affairs with a strenuous bookman in command of large contents. The Morley note was more delicate, more subtle, as if it had, after a life’s quest, brought letters and life together and was afraid to disturb their harmony by an incautious movement.

Books and great men of books in pictures—a Meredith, a Victor Hugo; but also the high masters of affairs—an old portrait of Lincoln, an unusual one of Gladstone, catching him while on an Italian tour. You see, he who here walked the “studious cloisters pale” was himself both the man of letters and the statesman. That ‘Pensero,’ on a top shelf, looked down on both, talked silently to both, engaged in long communings :

“Till old experience do attain  
To something like prophetic strain.”

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Young John Morley's Oxford tutor left him a legacy of ten pounds, and with it he bought his 'Penseroso'—thinking, no doubt, that in this fine figure, deep in thought, there would always be good company and good counsel. It took the imagination to the Medicis of Florence, to Michael Angelo's monuments of them in their ancient haunts, and to a certain poem by Swinburne in his "Songs Before Sunrise." This is the poem on the thought in Michael Angelo's famous verses in the old Medici Chapel, applied by Swinburne to the Europe of his day :

"In thine hour come to wake, O slumbering Night ?  
Hath not the Dawn a message in thine ear ?

Though thou be stone and sleep, yet shalt thou hear  
When the word falls from Heaven—Let there be light.  
Thou knowest we would not do thee the despite  
To wake thee while the old sorrow and shame were  
near ;

We spake not loud for thy sake, and for fear  
Lest thou should'st lose the rest that was thy right,  
The blessing given thee that was thine alone,  
The happiness to sleep and to be stone :

Nay, we kept silence of thee for thy sake  
Albeit we knew thee alive, and left with thee  
The great good gift to feel not nor to see ;  
But wilt not yet thine Angel bid thee wake."

If those lines applied to Europe when Swinburne wrote them, how much more have they

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applied to it in our day ! “ The world,” Lord Morley wrote in his ‘ Recollections,’ “ is travelling under formidable omens into a new era, very unlike the times in which my lot was cast.” It is a sentence that beats like a tattoo, a word that might come from the silent ‘ Penseroso ’ if he could speak.

Strangely was he, with his wise reticence, illustrative of Lord Morley’s temperament, character, outlook. Comrades they were through the dark of night and the clear of day, comrades in search of truth and the well-being of every man, and comrades they remained to the end. One to the other they said, “ Life is no stage-play but a hard campaign with some lost battles ” ; and, for amen, “ Only let the anchor hold ! ”

Naturally when the “ greater freedom and less responsibility ” of Gladstone’s phrase came to him, Lord Morley was able to read more than he managed to do in his crowded years. Every one has a mental roll of books which he means to retrieve some day. He turned back on his roll-call, sometimes, perhaps, to exclaim, “ Ah, I read this before, for here are notes by me in it, and I had forgotten ! ” Possibly he worked in some sympathy with the familiar wisdom, “ When a new book appears, read an old one.” It would have been a likely line of literary country for one

who had known most of the great modern authors as friends and compeers, and therefore did not need to make lesser acquaintanceships on “ paper white.”

Hear him speak of George Eliot, and she almost came back to life again ; unbeautiful, may be, as Herbert Spencer ungallantly said, but genius-gifted—our supreme woman novelist. An anecdote illuminated Thomas Carlyle, as when “ Dizzy ”—it must have been “ Dizzy ”—wanted to give him the G.C.B. and he exclaimed gruffly, “ Grand Cap and Bells ! ” The novels of Thomas Hardy would leap from a memory of an early thing he sent to the Macmillans. It went to Lord Morley, as their reader, and he, much struck with its quality, asked the author to his little house in London, where they talked it over, to their mutual encouragement.

Victorians ! No doubt. But what did the Victorians not do in authorship ? For one thing what Lord Morley called a “ model biography,” Carlyle’s ‘ John Sterling.’ Of another biography, Lockhart’s ‘ Scott,’ he said that artistically it is too long, but that nothing could be too long where Scott is concerned, for he was worth anything. A second Scotsman, James Boswell, is behind the finest biography in English literature, his ‘ Johnson,’ and one reflects on Lord Morley’s

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association with men born in the northern kingdom, or heirs of its blood.

Early, there was John Stuart Mill, later William Ewart Gladstone, whose Scots rod and sceptre he may be said to have taken up when he settled politically among the friends of the Montrose Burghs. “A Highlander in the custody of a Lowlander” was the Morleyism for Gladstone, and it is perfect as an analysis of him and of the Scotsmen who do most prevail in history. They are a blend of the two races of their country, the Celt and the Saxon, imagination and action ; and when you get that blend happily it is all-conquering.

Of the great fellows whom Lord Morley had known, he would certainly say that Gladstone was the greatest. What, however, did the term mean ? —define it. With his instinct for the light of a phrase, Lord Morley would probably have accepted the late Lord Salisbury’s tribute to Gladstone, that he was “a great Christian.” It means everything, it has spaciousness, in particular it suggests Gladstone’s moral greatness. Sometimes it had to stand a strain—say, when the Parnell Divorce ruined all Gladstone’s fair plans for Ireland and he said grimly, yet whimsically, “I wonder if the S.P.C.K. has a copy left of ‘How to be a Christian’ ? ” If that story is not

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in Morley's 'Gladstone' it might well be, only there was so much to go into it.

When he went to Hawarden and saw "Mr. G.'s" papers, piles and piles of them, he must have said to himself, "What folly is this on my part? I had better cut it back to London." Fortunately, he did not let his task do more than dismay him, otherwise we should not have had a political biography which is already English literature.

He sat down and wrote, not quickly—for to him writing had always been to be absorbed—but resolutely, giving three of the best years of his life to the service of his dead master and friend, who well said in his diary, in another connexion, "J. Morley is, on the whole, about the best stay I have." English authorship has no finer instance of devotion, nay of self-sacrifice, than the writing of the 'Gladstone.' The heart and mind of its writer so gave themselves to it that, when it was finished, and a friend said, "You will be very glad," the answer came quietly, slowly, "Yes, very glad—and very lonely!"

Years before, so it is understood, the biographer of Gladstone was half-sounded as to whether he would care to write the life of Disraeli. Nothing, as he saw life, could come of that, though, indeed,

the figure of “Dizzy,” with its gay literary helm and its adventurous political buckler, could never be overlooked by an eye so seeing as Lord Morley’s. A clear proposal was made to James Anthony Froude to be the biographer of Beaconsfield, and something, by way of memoir, he did write. Perhaps he shied at the full business when he was taken to survey it in massed papers and correspondence, as others shied after him.

Somewhere there is a lament that “Dizzy” should have forsaken literature for politics, the lamentator holding them a less worthy calling. One wondered what Lord Morley himself, acclaimed statesman, acclaimed man of letters, would have to say to that. If he were asked his modesty would have kept him silent, for it is a large question : Which is the greater thing, the pursuit of letters or the practice of affairs ? Anyhow, no man could answer when the question becomes personal to himself, a judgment on his own career.

But there is in the ‘Recollections’ of Lord Morley a sentence which may possibly be read as an index to their writer’s mind. It is where he speaks of two Indian gentlemen coming fully, for their people, into the councils of India—a reform carried by him in the teeth of all tradition and opposition, a reform which opened the door

to much that may come. "I think," he said in so many words, "we have done a good day's work"; and one adds to that the unspoken, "my best day's work." It is a picture for fame, that of the India of Clive and Hastings, the India of the gorgeous East, ruled by John Morley, and by him given the talisman-key to freedom and a future even more splendid than its past. "Democracy," writes Rousseau, "is a government for the gods." Why not for the gods of India?

Would it be accurate to say that Lord Morley, by temperament, by training, by practice, was a democrat in affairs, an aristocrat in literature? Would he have repelled that idea? May be not. He taught that "free minds make brave men," and he was an English heir to the temper of Voltaire. He held that "noble moralities" are the "life-blood of style," and he exclaimed, "Have lofty sentiments and your manner of writing will be firm and noble."

A democrat of politics, an aristocrat of letters! Does the one not go with the other?—are they not comrades of the heart and head? Surely! So, if the heart is to hallo over the hill for what betterment may lie there, let the mind wrap the treasure in cloth-of-gold. The heart, as Robert Burns sings, is "aye the part, aye, that makes

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us right or wrong.” It is the mind of that heart which makes the way right or wrong for the following multitude. Thus had Lord Morley been the dreamer in democracy, large of view, full of sympathy for suffering, an enemy of oppression, cosmopolitan in his humanity ; thus also had he been an aristocrat in letters, faithful to the English quality of reserve, which is imagination, faithful also to that French terseness which is truth.

Hear him speak of King Edward, and the expression “a fine fellow” would be used. Exactly—no more needed to be said ; the words presented him, he was a “fine fellow.” Or, at the other end of a talk, it would be General Booth and what sort of leader was he—“had he an organ ?” With four words a whole mission was laid bare to us. And always with Lord Morley life and letters walked the mountain together.

Did the French begin to write from cloisters ? Nay, but from the open of life. The sun, the moon, and the stars were in good writing, giving it elegance and beauty, as they are in the good heart, giving it sympathy and ideals. Thus were we lifted on to the rare heights above the clouds by John, Viscount Morley, when he wrote or spoke. He carried us to the serene, to the blue alps of thought, to the high altitudes where only what is knightly can live.

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He is here no more in the body but his spirit remains with us, a precious legacy. The charm of his personality and the radiance of his pen are ours to have and to hold. Merely to be in his company for an hour or two, was to say of him what he says of Edmund Burke : that he had “ The sacred gift of inspiring men to use a grave diligence in caring for high things and in making their lives at once rich and austere.”

A MODERN ENGLISH DIARIST



## V

## A MODERN ENGLISH DIARIST

YOU will have heard the name Grant Duff, though it may not rest familiar in your ear. It stood for Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff, who, at one time, was a very distinguished M.P., and generally an accepted counsellor to the nation. He sat in the House of Commons for years as member for the Elgin Burghs, and the speeches which he delivered to his constituents came to be known as the "Elgin Speeches."

He was a Liberal, of a Whig type of thinking, and eventually he went to India as Governor of Bombay. Finally, being a cultured man, a scholar and a gentleman of position as well as a legislator, he was the friend of nearly all the distinguished Victorians. Personally, he was, incidentally, the most notable diarist of our time, anyhow in scholarly industry, and that is how we are concerned with him here.

He had his London home in an old house on the Chelsea Embankment, not far from where Carlyle lived, and I remember very well going to

see him there. He welcomed me in his library, a large, quiet room, full of books, which manifested that they were the possessions of a bookman and not merely there to be looked at. He welcomed me cordially, although he knew I was going to have a talk with him about his diary ; and he made me feel at home at once, for he had the homely way which is characteristic of even austere Scotsmen.

He did have an air of Victorian austerity, with his long face, his longish nose, his high-boned cheeks, his deep-set eyes, his spacious forehead, and his grey hair and grey beard. He had, I recollect, very nervous, artistic hands, with slender fingers which moved quickly when he spoke, especially when he was very interested in some subject. He was an admirable talker, being grave when gravity was the right note, lighter when a story or an anecdote with humour in it, happened to come along.

He told me that he began his famous diary—which you may read in ever so many volumes published by John Murray—in the year 1847, when he was going up to Oxford University. Eventually he kept two diaries : a brief one, which he filled up every day, and another one which he wrote out fully when he had accumulated a certain amount of material in the small

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one. He brought his record down to January 23, 1901, the date on which King Edward VII held his first Privy Council, with Sir Mount-stuart Grant Duff as one of those present ; and that was the “ finis.”

It will be seen, therefore, that it is almost certainly the fullest Victorian record that we have except, indeed, Queen Victoria’s “ Letters,” and that the man who kept it was a man worth seeing and worth hearing about. He said that people, even his own friends, often spoke of him as the Modern Pepys, but, with a laugh, he added that he was afraid he did not come up to that description. His diary scarcely had the characteristics of Pepys’ but rather, he thought, corresponded to the second most famous diary in English literature, that of John Evelyn. Evelyn’s diary, like his, was a simple effort at an intimate picture of the writer’s own time and the people he had known.

How many of us begin to keep diaries ? Ever so many. How many of us manage to keep them for any length of time ? Hardly any of us. I put this to Grant Duff, and he said : “ Well, the keeping of my diary has been a real pleasure. You have only to acquire the habit of jotting down your doings from day to day, or every few days, and it soon becomes second nature. You

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get a great reward for that effort, because you can always renew, in the written pages, your friendships with interesting men and women. Moreover, it is like living your life over again, and no doubt we all, even in imagination, enjoy that."

Here was an authority to ask what should be put into a diary, supposing a man or a woman had the courage to go on keeping it. Grant Duff's answer was that he put into his own diary only what promised to be useful to himself or to somebody else, and he thought that was a good rule to go upon. He never meant to make his journal a depository of indiscretions, but a journal of good nature. For that reason he had made comparatively few references to politics, because they meant controversy, and that, perhaps, is a hint for other people who may take to the diary habit.

So much for the "human document" itself, and now for some of the things, not written in it, which Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff related to me—for instance, about the literature and the literary men of the Victorian era. He thought the Victorian age had been a great time in literature, but that it was for future generations to map out this greatness, as we have mapped out the greatness of the Elizabethan period. For himself,

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he felt it had been a privilege to live in such a time as the Victorian age, and to know so many people who had a part in shaping it.

He spoke of some of those men, and he dwelt with especial kindness on Robert Browning, the poet, of whom nearly every Victorian writer has said that he was "charming." "No," said Grant Duff, "that is not the word to use about Browning. It would not convey the impression which he left upon you. Personally he looked more like a merchant than a poet. He was a virile personality, a very agreeable fellow, and a constant diner-out, there resembling Thackeray."

Of Charles Dickens, Grant Duff also spoke warmly and cordially. He met him first at a house which Sir Richard Owen, the zoologist, had in Richmond Park. After a little dinner the guests would stroll out, two by two, on the garden pathways ; and it so happened that Grant Duff's companion, during such a stroll, was Charles Dickens.

The novelist's appearance, he recalled, did not at first impress him very favourably. "It was nothing more than that I simply did not seem to be attracted by him. Before our conversation was over, however, this feeling had wholly passed away. Outwardly he was not attractive to look at, but when you knew him he was exceedingly so."

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That was a general impression of the great novelist, and a particular memory which Grant Duff took away from their first meeting had to do with Louis Napoleon. He asked Dickens how this Bonaparte had struck him. Was he a man of character, or ability, or what?

“No,” answered Dickens, “I was never struck with him except once, and that was when he gave rather a clever account of being had up at Bow Street.” What the incident could have been Grant Duff did not know, for he did not ask Dickens, and, moreover, he may not have known either.

Cardinal Newman, Herbert Spencer and George Eliot were other Victorians of whom our diarist chatted simply and informingly. He allowed that George Eliot was a woman of extraordinary intellectual gifts, but added that she was not a good talker. She had the fault that when you heard her talk you almost thought you were reading her books. He mentioned two contemporary women whom he easily put before her as conversationalists—Mrs. Augustus Craven, and Lady Blennerhasset. They were, he thought, two of the most brilliant women of their day, shining lights whom he was never tired of praising.

Naturally, the name of Thomas Carlyle came up, and Grant Duff said that once more it was a

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case of genius not accompanied by beauty, for Carlyle was very ugly—at all events most people would have thought so. He suggested, with a laugh, whether it might not be possible for somebody wishing to write an original book to do a study on the text : “ Genius and Good Looks,” or, rather, the absence of them.

It was hardly possible to refrain from asking him what he thought of the great Carlyle controversy created by Froude’s indiscreet biography of the Sage of Chelsea ; in other words the domestic relationships of Thomas Carlyle and Jane Welsh Carlyle. Grant Duff deprecated the whole business, saying, “ Whatever there may have been behind the scenes, I never, during my visits to the Carlyles, saw anything which would lead me to think they lived unhappily, much less in the continual state of nagging that some chronicles of them seem to suggest. They were,” he added, “ a very interesting couple, and Carlyle could only be ranked as one of the big figures of his time.”

This appreciation Grant Duff qualified with the remark that probably Carlyle had been greater as a temporary influence than he would be as a permanent influence. To-day some people will say that that prophecy has become a fact, while others may say the contrary. What we do not

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all know to-day, is what Grant Duff put into the remark that Carlyle, as he saw him, always had a sort of twinkle in his eye, a sort of signal telling you that you were not to accept as gospel every word and phrase he let fall.

Next in our conversation there came a surprise, for Grant Duff said quietly, as if the thing had been a long conviction with him, that of the three great poets of the Victorian era, Tennyson, Browning and Matthew Arnold, he thought the last by far the greatest. Anyhow, Arnold appealed most to him, perhaps because he found himself most in sympathy with him as a poet, and because he thought his poetry had more in it than either that of Tennyson or Browning. He felt, moreover, that Arnold's influence on English literature was something which would grow, and, even if he remained the poet of the minority, that minority would be very influential.

Many people, when writing of Matthew Arnold have spoken of his egotism, of his sense of his own value, and that came up in this talk with Grant Duff. "Well," he said, "he was the only man I ever knew in whom egotism was a charm," and he gave me an anecdote in illustration of this.

Arnold and Lubbock, and other well-known people had been the guests of himself and his

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wife down in Buckinghamshire. Arnold was going back to London, and as he was leaving on a dark December afternoon he said : “ Now, what will you people do ? It is only three o’clock, and none of you play billiards, and it is a disagreeable day, and I am going away—what will you do ? ”

His remark was natural, spontaneous, and playful, there expressing three very characteristic things in Matthew Arnold’s character. He may have looked grave, but Grant Duff was sure that he had an infinite fund of humour. Why, his friends often found him laughing at himself, a simple proof that one does have the gift of humour.

Turning from literary celebrities, Grant Duff spoke of his friendship with Queen Victoria’s eldest daughter, who became the Empress Frederick of Germany. He also spoke of the loss her death was, not only to the German nation, but to the intellectual well-being of the whole world, for he regarded her, quite apart from her rank, as a very highly gifted lady.

“ I feel, indeed,” he said, “ that she was one of the great women of her day. What was so notable about her was her mixture of intellect and sympathy. She would have made her mark in any rank of life, and I regard it as one of the

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calamities of the world that the Emperor Frederick died before he and his Empress could carry out the mission which seemed to lie before them. His death meant the going out of light and leading for the world, and it made the greatest difference to mankind."

One wonders what Grant Duff would say to-day on that text, speaking with a knowledge of the Great War. He would have put his judgment in his own way, for nothing impressed me more than the vigour of his individuality and his power of observation in clear, telling English. He had a Scottish accent, it is true, but then it helped him, when he cared, to speak good French, and the motto he used for his diary was :

*"On ne doit jamais encore que de ce qu'on aime."*

II

LITERARY HISTORY WITHOUT  
TEARS

F



IS THE COUNTRY-HOUSE LIBRARY  
DOOMED ?



## VI

### IS THE COUNTRY-HOUSE LIBRARY DOOMED?

IS the English country-house library coming to an end? By that one means the library formed, or kept going, as part of the appointments of a stately home of England.

We know that in recent years many libraries associated with great English country-houses have been sold. Sometimes this has marked the end of a family line, and so been a natural thing, if not absolutely inevitable. Oftener it has been an evidence of the strain which has fallen upon old families, especially since the Great War.

Many of the literary treasures thrown on the market have gone to our kinsfolk in America, where rich men, thinking it a hobby of quality, are keen on collecting books or pictures. We, in peaceful and well-to-do years, gathered literary and art trophies from all parts of Europe. Perhaps there has to come to them, as to everything, animate or inanimate, a dispersal day. It has been with us, more or less, since Sir William

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Harcourt's famous Budget took a heavy toll of death duties and so invaded the country-house library.

An English country-house is to-day faced with three possibilities, and one of them has to be taken and the others left. It may sell its library, it may carry it on without adding to it, and, therefore, with no great expense, or it may improve it by buying new and rare books. The last case puts, in its definite form, the question : “ Is the country-house library doomed ? ”

There are not many old English families, it is to be feared, who can afford to keep a library up to date. There is the cost, and even if that were not an obstacle, is the undertaking really possible, having regard to the huge number of books published ? It is an affair of ways, as well as of means, because money, thank heaven, will never be everything in the literary world, which has a spiritual soul.

It was easy to keep a country-house library going in the days when Dickens and Thackeray and other famous Victorians were writing. The new books of real importance were comparatively few, and they almost selected themselves. My lord instructed his bookseller to send him everything written by the giants of the time, to have an eye for any new writer popping up with a book

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of quality, and hey, presto ! the business was done.

The books came along as regularly as the morning milk from his lordship's home farm, they were unbundled by his librarian, if he had one, or, if not, by his butler, and they were duly enshelved for an immediate or later reading. What a lovely, leisurely literary time was that, the hey-day of the English country library. Perhaps it made for "highbrowism," certainly for exclusiveness, but there could also be generosity and large-mindedness.

The world of books, like the world of everything else, has changed mightily since those far years. Some twelve thousand volumes of one sort or another leap forth every year from our publishing-houses, and where they all go goodness knows. Perhaps, in many cases, it does not matter, but it is clear that such a stream of fresh literature would drown the old-fashioned country-house library.

Even a well-equipped librarian would have most of his time occupied in selecting the books really worthy of places on his shelves. He would soon find himself crowded out, and, anyhow, one fine morning his employer would probably say, quite nicely but meaningly, "Is it, the cost apart, really worth while going on like this when the

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borrowing of current books is now so easy at the circulating and public libraries?"

You begin, when we examine the matter closely, to see that modern conditions are, in every way, making against the country-house library. Everybody now reads, and the popular book is a part of English democracy, which stands for the mass of readers, while only a small minority had access to the country-house library. It wears an antiquated air, even beside the rest of our country life, which is dominated by the motor-car and rising families.

Some of those families may be as much interested in books and libraries as the old English families were, conventionally, anyhow. If that be so, they will take care of a library into whose possession they may have come, by rent or by purchase. If there were no library to possess they may start one, and, being energetic and able to be open-handed, they may make it a good library, in which case let all the blessings for so amiable and admirable a venture be theirs.

Perhaps, however, it is safer to assume that a new country family will need time to evolve its library, because to simple human nature the joy of living is more attractive than the contemplation or reading of books. "Why," a man may quite fairly ask, "should I merely read about

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life, when I can live it? I can get adventure, romance, almost anything I like, so it's a second-hand business to just read about them."

A lady does not even ask herself the question, but calls for her horse and rides out, or for her motor and runs up to London, on luncheon bent at one of the fashionable hotels. Who amongst us is to find fault with all this, only the human factors on which the future of the country-house library depends, have to be borne in mind. You can never estimate possibilities at all unless you at least count them in, instead of just ignoring them.

We get, by one road or another, to this: that the English conditions which made possible the country-house library of old, are passing away beyond redemption, and that, if it is to remain a charming English institution, it must be on new lines, with new people. Even so, is its place, in the larger sense, not already taken by libraries accessible to everybody?

Nowadays, when everybody reads, everybody wants books and everybody should have them in the easiest possible way. A hundred years ago everybody did not read and therefore did not want books, and our intellectual people were really confined to the upper, middle and professional classes. There is not much evidence

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that owners of country-house libraries were in the hospitable habit of throwing them open to their neighbours. Book lovers, real or accidental, are jealous of their treasures, and, with large collections, that is selfishness, because the literary pasture is confined to a family and its immediate guests. It is lovely to have a library, but it is twice as lovely to give others the use of it.

Somebody has frankly called the English country-house library of the old days a "selfish phenomena," in that it was knowledge and beauty protected from any general use. One need not go so far as this, in coming to the conclusion that the public library of to-day is a much larger national asset. Among other things it is better equipped for modern needs than the typical country-house library was for the needs of its time, whatever these may have been.

What was the literary joy of a few, is to-day the common right of all folk who wish to read. So regarded, the passing of the country-house library is not a funeral march calling for black plumes and coronachs. It is an expression of changes which have come about in our life as a people, and those changes have been winged with the motto, "The greatest good for the greatest number."

It is nonsense to say, what you may hear

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somebody saying, that the going of the country-house library is the sentencing to death of the private collector. To speak thus is to mix up two wholly different matters, for, in its day of pride, the country-house library did seek to represent and follow English literature, while the private collector only gives heed to his own tastes. He is more numerous than ever he was, and when a real treasure comes into the market he falls over his own full hands in the attempt to secure it.

We have, for a year or two, been witnessing a rather curious vogue in limited editions of old and new books of admitted name or quality. Have those high-priced publications, windfalls to astute publishers, been going into country-house libraries? Scarcely, not many of them, anyhow; but they have gone in bundles to the private collector who is to be found in the least expected, or suspected, places.

There is another thing to remember: that in the country house, as elsewhere, the woman is now the great reader. Is she to limit herself to books which a father or a husband might order for his library? Not a bit of it. She reads everything or anything, and the younger she is the more bravely she reads, usually, be it said, with benefit, as well as pleasure. A staid,

settled country-house library does not go with the alert, cultivated devouring woman of this Georgian time. Therefore she is not likely to help it, but, for all the disadvantages, there is no reason why it should not "carry on," probably in a modified form.

A country house without books is inconceivable, and a bedroom of such a house, which has not a quota of choice reading, is very near to barbarism. Our rising country families, since the new must, apparently, give place to the old, will surely take care that their homes are lit by literature. Some of them may even be depended on to give the country-house library a fresh fame, if not the glory that it had in the olden days when the English aristocrats had money to blow on literature and blew it. They may not all have been good readers, but they did understand that the house, whether in country or town, that is bookless, misses the sacred way which we call "Home."

SOME UNFINISHED ENGLISH  
NOVELS



## VII

### SOME UNFINISHED ENGLISH NOVELS

PROBABLY the saddest thing in all the world is an uncompleted task on which great hopes and expectations have been built. One means a task closed by death, rather than a task that has fallen to bits on the way, as a consequence of some imperfection.

Especially pathetic, both to the mind and the heart, is the unfinished literary task, the novel that was to be its writer's greatest work, or the history that had meant so much researchful toil. An ordinary every day work, such as the building of a bridge or the laying out of a garden, can be finished by some other hand—in a manner, certainly. So, some one will say, may a book. No doubt ; but that means a very different thing, for :

“ Ah, who shall lift the wand of magic power,  
And the lost clue regain ? ”

Thoughts of this kind must occur to many

of us as we turn the pages of Joseph Conrad's unfinished romance, 'Suspense.' It is not a fragment, like many tales left unfinished, but runs to some ninety thousand words. That is a length as great as many finished novels, and thus we may judge that the completed book would have been of unusual length as well as of unusual quality. "A fragment—yes," says the author's friend, Mr. Richard Curle, "but a huge fragment, full of power and fire; a fragment that will take its place among the recognized masterpieces of this remarkable man."

Undoubtedly, Conrad was remarkable, a most impacting personality, or he could never, from being a Polish boy who became a sailor on an English ship at Marseilles, have climbed to the top of the English literary ladder. He was no "climber" in the other sense of that word, no pusher and thruster, bent on getting ahead, but a modest, rather silent man who rejoiced in the seclusion of the Kentish country, and wrote with the sweat of his soul until fame tardily found him.

No English novel more interesting than 'Suspense' has been left incomplete since Charles Dickens died while he was writing 'Edwin Drood,' if we except Robert Louis Stevenson's 'Weir of Hermiston.' But what we got of that

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Scottish romance is comparatively short, while both 'Edwin Drood' and 'Suspense' might stand for full novels, if we only knew their conclusions. Many people have sought to solve 'The Mystery of Edwin Drood,' and a good many have made the effort in print, among them the late Sir William Robertson Nicoll, as fertile and scholarly a Scotsman as our generation has known.

"The only one of Dickens's novels," Mr. G. K. Chesterton has written, "which he did not finish was the only one that really needed finishing. He never had but one thoroughly good plot to tell and that he has only told in Heaven." There, surely, Mr. Chesterton forgets 'A Tale of Two Cities,' the most storyish story, as one might say, of all the Dickens novels, for it would read well and excitingly whoever had written it. Character was Dickens's first stroke of genius, the painting of character; but if he had cared he could have planned plots with any writer.

What we know about the possible conclusion of 'Edwin Drood' is exactly what we know of how Joseph Conrad would have finished 'Suspense'; that is to say, we don't know—we can merely speculate. We can only be sure that Dickens would have been the great melodramatist to the end of 'Edwin Drood,' and that Conrad

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would have been the great picturer of colour, conditions, and the human scenery of life, to the end of ‘Suspense.’ Here are master writers who moved with the tides of their genius, followed them wherever they led ; not merely scribes, like so many makers of the modern novel.

“A wilful convulsion of brute nature,” are the last words of Stevenson’s ‘Weir of Hermiston,’ and they were written by himself or dictated to his stepdaughter, Mrs. Strong, a few hours before his death in far Samoa. His friend, Sir Sidney Colvin, compared the importance of the story, in Stevenson’s writings, to what ‘Edwin Drood’ is in those of Dickens, or to a ‘Denis Duval’ in Thackeray’s. But it remains relatively more, for while each of those fragments holds an honourable place among its author’s works, the fragment of ‘Weir’ certainly holds the highest place in all the works of “R. L. S.” Similarly, Conrad was, perhaps, upon his finest literary voyage with ‘Suspense,’ into which he had poured the wealth of his acquired knowledge and the force of his co-ordinating imagination.

There was never, apparently, any thought of getting somebody else to complete the novel. How could there rightly be, for Conrad was himself, his writing his, and his alone. Still, there have been unfinished stories which others

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have finished, and Stevenson's 'St. Ives' is one of them.

It is a romance in which his own romantic town of Edinburgh figures largely, especially the dark castle overlooking Princes Street. "Q," who does not need to be further identified as Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, was asked to add closing chapters to 'St. Ives.' He has, as a novelist, much of the Stevensonian spirit, and right well he discharged his task ; so well, indeed, that if you did not happen to know, you could hardly tell where his rescuing hand comes in.

The Conrad situation with 'Suspense' has another full precedent in Thackeray's 'Denis Duval,' and it also was written with all the author's freshness of power. Its scenes are laid about Rye and Winchelsea and the Romney Marsh, a country which Thackeray peopled with Huguenot refugees, Roman Catholic squires, officers of the King's Navy and smugglers. For Kent was a busy scene of their activity when spirits and wine were the interdicted goods, not silk and satins coming from France, on which there is a tax to-day.

Jane Austen also "blazed the trail" for an unfinished 'Suspense' with fragments which included 'Sandition' and 'The Watsons,' both, by the way, recently reprinted. Miss Austen is

a classic in the sense that we take her for granted, and so we do not speculate much on what would have happened if her unfinished stories had been finished. She is read for herself, her style, and her manner, and the mirror she holds up to time, more than for any thrilling romance she tells. We have a score of women novelists who could lead her at that particular literary game, if it can be called "literary."

Even Benjamin Disraeli, foremost as a politician but also notable as a novelist, is in the company of Conrad and 'Suspense.' Part of a novel was found among his papers, and it was first printed in 'The Times' twenty years ago. Evidently the author of 'Endymion' had planned to make his great protagonist, Gladstone, a central figure in what, had it gone on, would have been a political novel, comparable, possibly, to the earlier 'Coningsby' and 'Lothair.'

There was an unfinished story by Mrs. Elizabeth Gaskell, 'Wives and Daughters,' running in the 'Cornhill Magazine' when she passed away. Anthony Trollope's tale, 'Mr. Scarborough's Family,' was appearing in 'All the Year Round' when he died, and he left 'An Old Man's Love' complete in manuscript and 'The Land-Leaguers' incomplete and yet nearly complete.

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“Ouida,” who was Mademoiselle de la Ramée, a strange and remarkable woman, has an unfinished novel recorded in her bibliography. It is called ‘*Helianthus*,’ and is a drama on liberty, set in a country which, though she called it *Helianthus*, was, no doubt, Italy—really her adopted country. She spent much of her life there, and there she died, among her dogs, a death which had a squalor of want, strangely in contrast to the pomp and luxury of her story-worlds.

Odd, even among the curiosities of unfinished novels, is the affair of Algernon Charles Swinburne’s ‘*Lesbier Brandon*,’ so named after the heroine. Swinburne worked at it, off and on, in a way as disjointed as the romance itself, and he had it set up in type in the ‘seventies. A part proof of it certainly exists, probably more, though we shall only know that when we get all Swinburne’s literary remains printed ; but the manuscript was said, long ago, to be lost.

Walter Pater, who was an essayist, not a novelist in the large and powerful sense of Joseph Conrad, has his “unfinished romance.” It is entitled ‘*Gaston de Latour*,’ and if it had been completed it would have been a parallel study in character to his ‘*Marius the Epicurean*.’ Some chapters of ‘*Gaston de Latour*’ were printed in

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‘Macmillan’s Magazine’ in the summer of 1889, and the whole story would have turned on the spiritual development of a refined and cultivated mind.

Not very long ago we all heard with interest that an unfinished story by Charles Kingsley had come to light. Then we got it under the title ‘The Tutor’s Story,’ and under the auspices of Kingsley’s daughter, “Lucas Malet,” who had found it among her father’s papers. It needed a little revision, for it could be finished, and the result was a pleasantly readable harmony; not perhaps, Kingsley at his very best, but Kingsley, and therefore a welcome “find.”

Somebody will have made a library of the novels left unfinished by their writers, and a very interesting group of books it should be. William De Morgan is in it with two, ‘The Old Madhouse’ and ‘The Old Man’s Youth,’ which his wife brought to a close. This was no difficult task, for De Morgan was accustomed to write his stories in her companionship, and she knew all about them and what they were to be. She was thus almost a collaborator—anyhow, in sympathy and interest—and when such an element is present an unfinished story may well be finished by the other partner.

Sir Walter Besant completed Wilkie Collins’s

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‘Blind Love,’ which was in course of serial appearance when the author was taken ill in the year 1889. Nobody could have been more fitted for such a commission than Besant, because he and James Rice had written stories together, and thus he had acquired the art of “joining up” in a very special degree. There was no need for him to say what Longfellow said of Nathaniel Hawthorne’s ‘Dolliver Romance’ :

“The unfinished window in Aladdin’s Tower  
Unfinished must remain !”

Hawthorne’s unfinished literary legacy also included ‘Septimus Fulton,’ or, at all events, the manuscript had to be set in order by his daughter Una, who had the benefit of Robert Browning’s advice and assistance. That was a friendly courtesy from literary England to literary America, and it is a thing which has, in one form or another, been as frequent as it has been beautiful. After all, the two peoples are now jointly in charge of the English language, including notable “unfinished novels.”

Henry James, who lived so long in England that he became one of us, and indeed was naturalized in the wartime, has a pair of unfinished novels to his score. ‘The Ivory Tower’ is a picture of two old men, Mr. Gaw and Mr.

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Betterman, who were business rivals, and such bitter rivals that each almost prayed for the death of the other. 'The Sense of the Past' has for its central character a young American who inherits an old London house from the English branch of the family.

Henry James would, most probably, have liked George Gissing's incomplete 'Veranilda,' because it has the odour of Roman life in the sixth century. Certainly he would have been amused with an incident which connects Grant Allen's novel 'Hilda Wade' and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the creator of the great Sherlock Holmes, though this time the famous amateur detective is not in the bill.

Grant Allen lived at Hindhead, a corner of Surrey which has attracted many authors, including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. They were close neighbours and friends, and Grant Allen, lying on his deathbed, was worried because two numbers of a serial, 'Hilda Wade,' which he had appearing in the 'Strand Magazine,' were unfinished. He asked Sir Arthur Conan Doyle to write them, and the charge was promptly carried out and the difficulty overcome.

Now, here is the curious thing, the humour following hard after the pathos, as it has a habit of doing in actual life. Nobody knew of Sir

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Arthur Conan Doyle's little part in 'Hilda Wade,' but a stranger man, confusing him and Grant Allen in a general fashion, wrote saying he had got a baby daughter and that "in honour of me" he was calling her "Hilda Wade." That was a misaddressed letter which really delivered its compliment at a right address, and this does not often happen either with letters or with life.



THE STORY OF THE POPULAR  
REPRINT



## VIII

### THE STORY OF THE POPULAR REPRINT

WE speak of the new books and praise or blame them, as if they were the books which most people read. It is not so ; and there we have an example of what is frequent —much talk, not so much wool.

If you go about, walking on your feet, riding in a train, anyhow you like, so long as you are not shut away in a luxurious motor-car, keep your mind alert and your eyes open, and you will see what the masses of people do read. They read little books, cheap books, reprints of classical works, or well-known works, or, it may merely be, of diverting and sensational works.

Wealthy folk, comfortable folk, occupy the stalls of a theatre where, as often as not, they sink, as it were, into the furniture. They are the same folk, or some of them, who buy the new books, because, as they would remark : “ You must know what’s being read,” or because “ It’s the correct thing ” to get all the new books.

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The real theatre audience is, however, in the pit and the stalls ; and similarly the people who go there are the great readers of books ; that is to say, readers of the nimble reprint. They cannot afford to gamble with their money, and so they safely buy reading of proven name and quality, work hall-marked as worth reading, or if not that, and perhaps quite modern, then appealing in some human way.

Surely the pretty reprint—and it can be pretty even in paper-covers—is a capital refuge, a sort of “safety first” place from the confusion of many new books. But hasn’t somebody put that problem into a verse ?—

“ The books we think we ought to read are poky, dull,  
and dry ;

The books that we should like to read, we are ashamed  
to buy ;

The books that people talk about, we never can recall ;  
And the books that people give us—oh, they’re the  
worst of all ! ”

Even so, one does get gifts of nice good reprints, and when those gifts come from a friend versed in English literature, then they are indeed worthy of all welcome and all acceptance. Not only is the reprint nimble, getting here and there, but it is universal, like the flowers, the trees, and the fresh air. It is the mental window

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through which the sun shines on many spirits that otherwise would be dark and dreary.

It is even more than that. It is a supreme link between the peoples of the world, for when some one reads a foreign language it is oftener in an old tried book, reprinted for to-day, than in a new book. The newspapers are the current links in the intelligence of the world, but reprints of books are a deeper mirror of this whole intelligence, towards its many parts. They carry our great authors everywhere ; all the time they speak their messages, in the daytime and in the silent watches of the night—they are mankind's new Sermon on the Mount.

It is important to remember this, because otherwise you are forgetting one of the great mental factors which is moulding the modern world. The “man in the street” has, or may very easily have, a book in his hand, and he who becomes master of a good book is on the way to becoming master of himself, and perhaps a guide to others. The working wife in the kitchen may, while she watches the gas-cooker, turn the pages of a classic, and from them get one gleam which alters her whole outlook. The reprint is the educator of democracy in the path it should rightly go, for it has given to democracy old teachers and modern prophets. Why not ?

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Where did this massive, unseen mental force originate? Where did this miracle-working thing have its sources? What is its life-story? for it is a great living being like a god on earth.

The reprint, the cheap edition, the pocket-edition, are not inventions of to-day, although their recent development might almost be described as a new and greater birth. The idea behind them, that of cheap books which shall go far and fare well, can be traced back to the time of a scholarly Venetian, Aldus Manutius. Go to the British Museum and ask for a copy which is there of his 'Virgil.' It will show you what he, and other book-makers of his time, could produce for something like a florin of our money. Printing was a primitive art when Aldus Manutius lived, but books, including cheap books for the masses, have always had a good habit of being possible.

Naturally, our Venetian used an italic type, and, in fact, he is supposed to be its inventor, and, thinking it hard to read, we should not use it to-day, except for foreign words or to emphasize a passage in English. But what does the type matter in a book revolution? And certainly Aldus Manutius was a scholarly revolutionary, who challenged the old world with a literary

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venture which has grown into the tremendous reprint of our world and generation.

If you are informed in the lore of books, and it is a pleasant land in which to browse, you will have heard of the Elzevirs, the Etientes, and others who came after Aldus Manutius in the same field of bookish exploration. An English token to him has been an “Aldine Edition” of our poets, and would not that have pleased the old fellow? Mostly a good bookman has a sweet vanity which likes to be recognized, and probably Aldus Manutius had his share of this charm—because it is a charm.

As a nation we are, may be, a little slow to take up new ideas, whether they have to do with labour or literature; or, rather, it once was so, for the modern person is eminently receptive, and sometimes nothing else. It was, therefore, not until the eighteenth century that we took the reprint well in hand and gave it the world’s push along which we always manage when we decide that we are really interested. What more characteristic English figure than Samuel Johnson—burly, bluff, outspoken, the very mettle of our island pasture—could have taken a leading part in creating the reprint in bulk.

John Newbery can fairly be called the father of the English Christmas-book for young people,

because it “grow’d” in his shop in St. Paul’s Churchyard. There is less certainty in calling any single man the father of the English reprint, but undoubtedly Samuel Johnson was a leader and a blesser in that venture. He wrote introductions for various reprints of the poets, and then there came along, under the auspices of one Dodsley, reissues of old plays. “Bell’s Poets,” sponsored at their launching by Samuel Coleridge and William Hazlitt, were other reprints, and so the “wonder grew” in that particular literary garden of the eighteenth century.

Our Great War carried something like desolation into the English book-world, but it is curious, looking backward, to find that the reprint continued to flourish during the Napoleonic wars. Perhaps the reason was that nowadays a war means the engulfing of a whole nation, while a century ago it was an affair of the fighting-men only. Anyhow, when Napoleon marched across Europe and back again, until his seven-league boots failed him at Waterloo, every English publisher, more or less, was having a library of cheap reprints or new editions. It was a matter of pride with him that he should do so, and it was also, clearly, a matter of good business.

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Have you a library? You should, you know,—either one made by yourself, or one inherited, which you must keep improving, alike by weeding out old volumes and by adding new volumes, for both processes belong to the literary gardening.

If you have a library, cast your eyes over the older things in it, and you will almost surely find fragments of some cheap series associated with the Longmans, the Murrays, the Bentleys, the Blackwoods, or the Chamberses. You have, in those names, keys to an old-time Valhalla of popular literature, and John Cassell should not be forgotten, nor that excellent English book-fellow, Pickering, and also there is Charles Whittingham, the founder of the Chiswick Press.

Some of us can remember London publishers who, when asked about the get-up of a book—say the type to be used for it—would answer: “Oh, we leave that to the printer.” Those publishers are now either dead or out of business, for the book with the right atmosphere of furnishing cannot be attained by leaving it to the printer. Whittingham and Pickering knew that doctrine, and practised it to the great advantage of the English reprint; practised it all the more effectively because they themselves were printers of originality and taste.

The old Germany of Goethe and Schiller was a land which loved the bookish thing and pursued it, and one of our most successful early English reprinters was Henry George Bohn, a young German born in London. German-like, he began on a strictly commercial basis, for he bought "remainders," meaning copies left unsold of a book, and had them bound or rebound and put on the market at attractive prices. Especially Bohn, as he developed, got hold of the English rights of good translations, and they were the making of Bohn's Library, which is still, in a new, more elegant form, a going concern.

Thomas Carlyle, a good judge always of books, said of Bohn's Library that it was the "usefullest thing" he knew. His friend Emerson declared, not less truly, that it had "done for literature what railroads had done for internal intercourse." Possibly Henry George Bohn might justly be given the epitaph that he was the first English publisher who made the reprinting of books a distinctive business. His books looked dull and uninviting to the eye, but then that was thought becoming in the Victorian days, for under them lay the doctrine that any gaiety of the mind took away from its seriousness. Bohn contributed both to the seriousness and

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the gaiety of the nation, for his “Cribbs” came greatly to be relied upon by young gentlemen who had examinations to pass and were not quite sure just how to pass them.

Some of us learned most of our Shakespeare from the “Globe Shakespeare,” and it recalls the “Globe Library” which the Macmillans launched in the eighteen-sixties. David and Alexander Macmillan, the founders of that great publishing-house, were remarkable men—Scotsmen, like so many other successful publishers. They knew how to bring literary scholarship to the door of the popular reader long before that door was strewn with papers of the tit-bit order. Their “Globe Shakespeare,” with its admirable text, and notwithstanding its small type, was a “boon and a blessing,” as well as a landmark in the English reprint.

Henry Morley, whose handbook on English literature used to be in every library, and still holds its own, was another pioneer with the cheap reprint. He, in fact, made it cheaper, without taking away from its quality, than it had yet been, as remember his “Universal Library.” It opened with an edition of Sheridan’s plays, and the price for that edition was only ninepence. Then he edited the “National Library” at sixpence in cloth binding, and three-

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pence in paper covers, and here was a most democratic achievement.

We talk of those who have built up our system of education, and should not a man like Henry Morley be well remembered? He did not figure in the reports and annals of Parliament, and he did not flare in the public eye at all. But his name was on the title pages of millions of reprints of genuine literature and that library went forth into the world and conquered. The conquering was the more worthy because it was done in season for the readers whom the new board-schools of the 'seventies were to throw up, all hungering for knowledge, too long held back from them.

There we come to the big educational thing which eventually led to the triumph of the reprint, as we know it to-day. Feed the masses with good reading! Teach them to know it by giving it to them! Ah, it was a grand occasion, and the English book-world, let every one admit, rose to the occasion.

A movement nearly always finds itself typified in the leadership of one man, and by general consent the late Mr. J. M. Dent was a "prince of reprinters," He began with the "Temple Shakespeare," and it began with him in that natural, gradual fashion which always belongs

## THE POPULAR REPRINT

to a new book or a reprint that has come to stay.

There was a little company of people with literary tastes, and they met at Toynbee Hall, down in Whitechapel, for the serious study of Shakespeare. Mr. Dent, who commenced life as a bookbinder, a fortunate event for the English “book beautiful,” was one of those serious students of Shakespeare. They found that their copies of the Master had varying texts, and this was both awkward and troublesome. Mr. Dent was set a-thinking twice over when a London bookseller said to him casually : “Why don’t we have a Shakespeare without any needless ‘flummery’?” By this he meant notes and explanations which obscured the text, rather than clarified it.

Here was the seeding of the “Temple Shakespeare,” which should be clear and purposeful, with a page throwing up acts and scenes, unbroken lines easy to read, and a get-up of austere attractiveness. It must, of course, be in many volumes—roughly, one for each play—but it must have dignity, beauty, and always practicability. Now it was not simple to crowd those desirable, nay, essential qualities into a pocket-sized volume, and yet that had to be done, and it was done.

## PAGES IN WAITING

Was the dreaming and planning of the “Temple Shakespeare,” as a house-wonderful, for our most wonderful literature, not one of the greatest tributes ever paid to Shakespeare? It was like inventing a new form of book architecture, for Mr. Dent got little help from the reprints of earlier years, though he did his best to find it. How well he solved his problem those of us know who have “Temple Shakespeares,” just as we know how scholarly was the handling of the text by the editor, Sir Israel Gollancz.

It was in 1894 that ‘*The Tempest*,’ the first volume of the “Temple Shakespeare,” was launched, and it made no great hit among the booksellers, though they liked it in every respect. The public liked it even more, and, discovering this, the booksellers ordered the second volume in far greater numbers when it came along. After that the “Temple Shakespeare” never looked back, and soon it was conquering not only England, Scotland, and Ireland, but all Greater Britain, the Great Republic of America, and every corner of the world in which the language Shakespeare spake is spoken and written.

Came the “Temple Classics” next, and they confirmed what the “Temple Shakespeare” had shown, that there were masses of readers awaiting the best English literature, if they were given

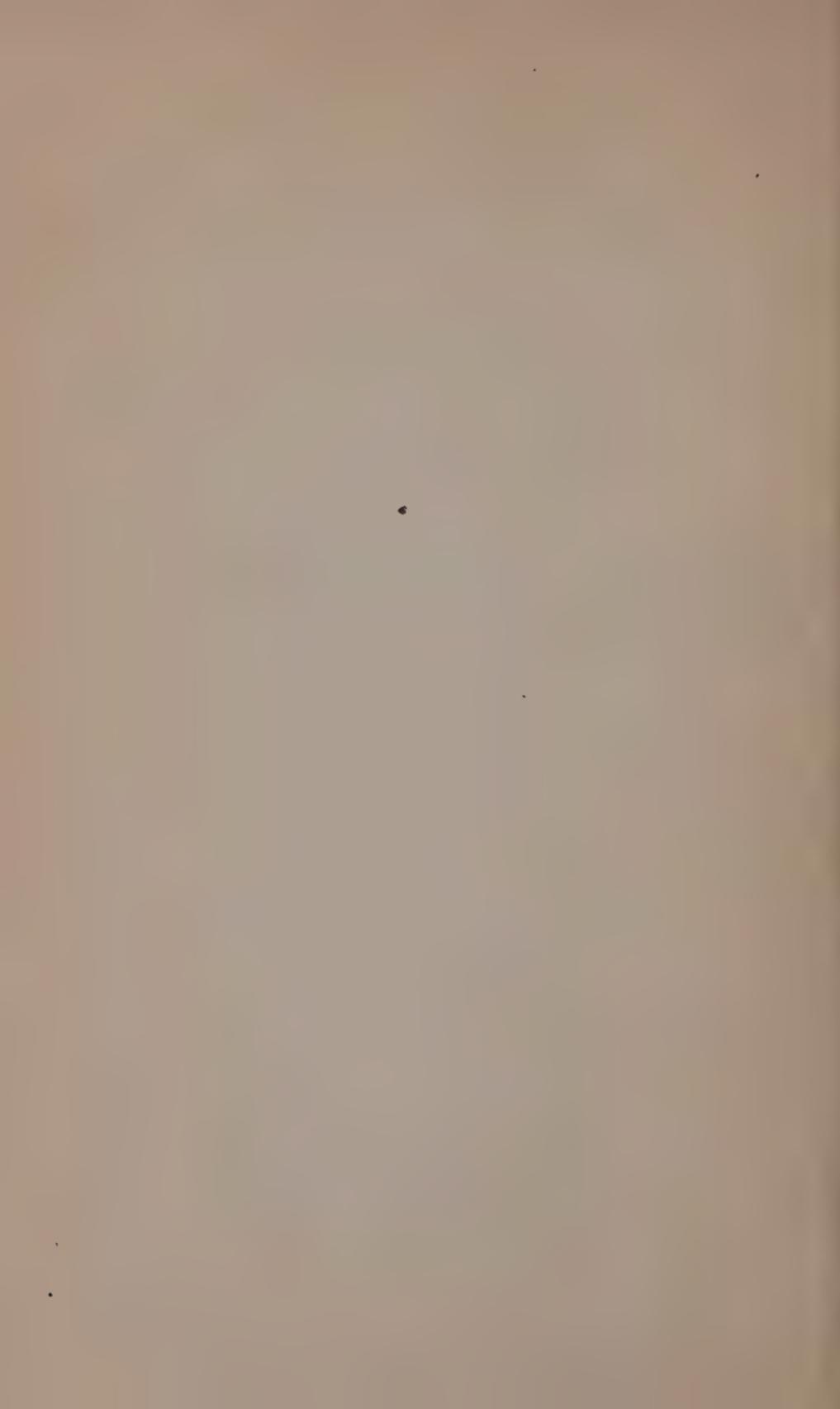
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it at a figure which would enable them to buy it. Take Dante's 'Paradiso.' It quickly sold twenty thousand copies. Take Caxton's 'Golden Legend,' or Malory's 'Mort d'Arthur,' or the 'Religio Medici,' or the 'Essays of Elia.' They sold in surprising numbers, and Mr. Dent was encouraged to other equally fine ventures, and especially, to "Everyman's Library," which is, perhaps, his greatest literary monument.

He has not been the only Richmond in the field, for Mr. Grant Richards launched the "World's Classics," a series now in the good charge of the Oxford University Press: There have been other libraries also which reprint the chosen literature of all times, in a comely dress, for very little money sought from the buyer, though the Great War, with its higher prices for everything, was also felt here. Old libraries, too, have been revived, and then there have been many series of popular reprints, fiction their strongest card. It is a spacious land, the English land of the reprint, and one could travel long in it and always be full, only every journey must end, and so must our present pilgrimage.



## EPIDEMICS AND “BEST SELLERS”



## IX

### EPIDEMICS AND “BEST SELLERS”

“I do not love thee, Dr. Fell,  
The reason why I cannot tell,  
But this I know, and know full well,  
I do not love thee, Dr. Fell.”

PERHAPS no verse in the English language is more often misquoted than this one about the Bishop who gave the Oxford University Press a famous set of type, which lasts to this day, although the donor died long ago. It goes simply, and so we think it easy to remember ; but it is really the simple things, which every one thinks they remember, that do most often get misquoted.

Anyhow, Dr. Fell has been given his place in the world of print and books, and he may fairly be taken as a patron and figurehead of that world. It interested him, in his day, and if he were back from wherever he is, it would interest him still more, because it is so much bigger and provides so many more texts for good talk.

What about “best sellers,” for instance ?

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The phrase never fell on his ears, because, when he lived, there were no so-called "best sellers," although, of course, there were books that sold better than others. There have always been those which have sold and those which have not, the pages that have been wafted to the top, and the pages that have fluttered to the bottom. That is a law of literature, as well as of Nature, for it can never be said of books :

" So all the little ships come sailing home across the sea,  
 Their voyage safely ended, their way they've wended  
 Home where they would be !  
 They sail across the bar where no storms are,  
 All dangers passed,  
 And two by two together,  
 Come safely home at last."

A new book is, or should be, a new life born into the world, and its voyage will only be revealed by the wings of time, which, indeed, direct that voyage, partly, perhaps, by chance, partly out of direct circumstances. Nor is the launching always hopeful, for somehow a literary Baby Bunting may receive more doubts and discouragements than hopes and encouragements. You remember the story of Charlotte Brontë, her father, a quite excellent and even sympathetic man, in his fashion, and her novel 'Jane Eyre.'

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"Papa, I've been writing a book," she said to him one day.

"Have you, my dear?" he remarked.

"Yes; and I want you to read it," Charlotte went on.

"I'm afraid," quoth he, "that it will tire my eyes too much."

"But," she answered, "it is not in manuscript, it is printed."

You gather that he must read 'Jane Eyre' then, and many other people read it, and it goes on being read, for it is, beyond question, a great English novel. Would it in our day and generation have been a "best seller," cracking into an immediate circulation of thousands and thousands of copies, and making a fortune for the writer? Who knows?

But its quality gives point to what should be said about modern "best sellers," namely, that they are not necessarily mere stories of an hour that passes. Often they are good stories, with real literary gifts expressed in them, and, in fact, the light opinion constantly heard that they are contemptible, can go very far wrong. It is a question between individual judgment and mass judgment, and the voice of the people, in bookish affairs, as well as in other affairs, has a strange, sometimes almost uncanny way of coming right.

Do not, then, turn a "best seller" away from your reading because of its label. True, it may be an indifferent affair, as poor stuff will sometimes go when better stuff sinks into the "remainder" market, and then into oblivion. Equally, however, it may be a novel not merely of moment for the moment, but of a creation which will endure. In that case you will have missed something, and it is a pity to miss something because one is prejudiced or not open-eyed and open-minded enough.

Most likely Bishop Fell, being, of course, like all bishops, a learned and philosophical man, would want to know about fashions in reading which make, at one time, for "best sellers" of a certain sort, and, at another time, for "best sellers" of another sort. Certainly there are book "epidemics," a stronger, better term than "fashions," and possibly a word in season and clarity can be said about them, for they are intimately related to "best sellers"—in fact, often the parents and guardians of them.

The book "epidemic" of which the fruit, good or bad, is the "best seller," is not a new thing, nor a development of our day, although, perhaps, we manage to engineer it on a larger scale, because now there are so many more readers. There have always been fashions in

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literature, and generally they have been created by the people at the top, the “intellectuals,” as we should call them. Somebody of eminence comes upon a book and declares, as Gladstone sometimes did on a post-card : “ This is a very remarkable deliverance and everybody should read it,” or words to that effect. Many people do read it, at once, others follow, and soon the book gets to the public, and finally to the masses.

Or there is the other way, that a particular sort of reading may be taken up by particular people at a particular time, and that also means an “epidemic.” Thomas Carlyle, with his strong likes and dislikes, inspired one or two schools of reading in the time of Queen Victoria. Ancient Greece, when it was coming near the end of its glory, the “grandeur that was Greece,” made a craze of Homer, and the Grecian who did not affect to know him and read him was no worthy Greek.

The modes of the moment in novels are almost as traceable as the changes of fashion in clothes, but with the difference that they are less directly created. Walter Scott, with his ‘Ivanhoe’ and its companion romances, gave a place to the historical novel which it long held and will never quite lose, though to-day its vogue is less than some of us would like it to be. Within easy

memory, Anthony Hope created the novel of the imaginary state, from which exotic romance might be extracted, when he wrote 'The Prisoner of Zenda.' He did not, it may be, know he was fathering a new kind of story, and until this day he even criticizes his "Zenda," but that does not affect the result.

'The Young Visiters' of Miss Daisy Ashford was the pioneer of a number of books by very young people, but they did not all do so well as hers. If 'The Young Visiters' had not happened to catch on we should probably never have heard of the others, because a literary fad or fashion is not followed unless there is good reason for following it. One circumstance certainly which gave Miss Ashford a chance was the presence in the book of a preface by Sir James Barrie who, as all his friends know, has a tender heart for other little folk, as well as for "Peter Pan." "Ah," said people, "Barrie has written this, and he's trying to pull our legs ; and at least we must read it."

There is never quite an "epidemic" in children's books, though 'Alice in Wonderland,' long a world's classic, may be said to come very near it. But the style of "Juveniles," as publishers and booksellers, in their unliterary way, will insist on calling them, has much altered

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since those of us who are growing old, were young. Miss Edgeworth, who was even better at painting morals than at adorning tales, would now find it hard to make a living as a writer for young people. Her kind of narrative is not wanted, and it may be doubted if children themselves ever much wanted it. Quite a new situation came when parents ceased saying, “This is what you must read,” and allowed their young folks to say, “This is what we like to read.”

Naturally, the Great War brought forth a huge stream of books dealing with it, and with subjects and people arising out of it. While the tumult raged, there was every call to read those books, particularly, as may be remembered, some in which selected letters from soldiers in the field were given. The whole ordeal, too, caused a great impulse in the reading of verse, as well as in the writing of it. There were, in fact, many literary offshoots of the Great War, but when it closed they gradually died away. No doubt some of them will spring up again when Armageddon comes to be judged as history, not described as a contemporary happening.

When the world was young, and civilization was simple, the opportunities for “book epidemics” were small. The bigger the world grows, and the more civilization becomes com-

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plicated, the more will be their opportunities. It is a well-known axiom with psychologists that a big crowd sways more sharply than a small crowd, once it has been moved by some thought or some condition. A reason for this is that individual opinions still count among a hundred people, but when you have a thousand people you have a herd which may stampede or do anything.

Some of us can recall, though there is the sadness of years in so doing, the sweep of Du Maurier's 'Trilby' across the British Isles and across America. Miss Beatrice Harraden's 'Ships that Pass in the Night' was a comet which other writers followed as a beacon of success. Madame Sarah Grand's 'Heavenly Twins' was thought to be portentous, the literary stroke of an age, if not of an epoch. But the "epidemics" for which those novels stood are now as cool as the lava which encases Herculaneum. "The moving finger writes," says Omar Khayyám, and always it is moving, and rarely is it the same finger, though in English literature, as in English life, there is a common parental thread of evolution.

One could mention eminent English judges who have been accustomed to refresh their minds, after a tiring day on the Bench, by

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reading a "mystery story," for that larger name includes the "detective story," such as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle has given us in his peculiar, masterly manner. He was forced, you will recollect, to bring back his Sherlock Holmes from the grave, or, at all events, from a precipice which he had fallen over, though, may be, there was a loophole in the fatality of the fall. This is an illustration of the hold which the Conan Doyle hero had taken on people, and what applies to him applies to the miracle-worker in mystery generally.

We may compare a good mystery story to a sensational trial reported in the newspapers, and there is hardly a writer of fame who has not had some kind of shot at it. Dickens did it in 'Bleak House,' and the original of his Inspector Bucket, as has always been supposed, was an Inspector Field of the London police, whom he personally knew. Then there is the 'Mystery of Edwin Drood,' a story which he left unfinished, and which a dozen later scribes, among them learned and scholarly men, have tried to plot out to the end.

We may gather altogether that when a writer dreams of being a "best seller," and it is a proper enough dream, even if it does not always come true, he is likely to have an eye on the mystery

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story. It naturally embraces the ghost story, which will never cease to have a vogue, because it is deep in the love and fear of young people and of "grown-ups."

Why should the ghost story be so popular, not only here but in every country of the world where people read? "For the simple reason," some one has said, "that it imposes absolutely no limit on the imagination." Other mystery stories turn on certain lines of thought or action, but the ghost story takes its flight in a spirit world in which we are all only dark travellers. Thus nothing can actually be solved unless, indeed, a "real ghost story," which usually turns out to have a simple and perhaps even a matter-of-fact explanation.

But to be accepted, to succeed, a ghost story must feel as if it had a real ghost, or otherwise illusion and delusion both fail. It must have a ghost who can give you a "gru," make you feel what it is to know terror, hold your attention in fear and trembling. Mrs. Anne Radcliffe remembered all that when she wrote her 'Castle of Otranto' more than a hundred years ago and instantly found herself famous.

England fairly claims the ghost story for its own, but it is difficult to prove even a literary invention when there is no patent and it is also

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to be found elsewhere. Norse writers and French writers did, however, most likely meet in our literature the examples which inspired them, and more recently America sailed in with the effectiveness which characterizes her when she wants to do anything. An American by birth, Henry James, was the author of that quite fine ghost yarn, ‘The Turn of the Screw.’ Another American, who remained one and did not, like Henry James, become an Englishman, has an equally good piece of ghost work, ‘The Upper Berth,’ to his credit. Need any lover of the writings of Marion Crawford be told that this tale is by him?

Writers who are less known continue to practise the ghost story on the principle, possibly, which has been expressed in the remark : “Man is incurably fascinated by the mysterious. If all the ghost stories of all the ages were blotted out, he would proceed to invent new ones.” That is a true saying, and so one fine day we may find an “epidemic” in ghost stories, or, anyhow, find them a certain packet to that Island of the Blest where “best sellers” come from.



# OUR OLDEST PUBLISHING HOUSE



## X

### OUR OLDEST PUBLISHING HOUSE

BY the chances of life and work, I have happened to know all the interesting English publishers of the past quarter of a century. One result of this is that a notable event on what I may call the business side of literature, always appeals to me.

It may not have the imaginative, even the poetic touch of mystery which is to be associated with the origin or writing of a great book. It comes after that, being the second degree of book-making, in fact as well as in fancy, but, nevertheless, it is important, and it may even be historic.

In all things there is first the dream—the dream which grows into a vision, so that the eye of the mind perceives it taking shape. Then comes the business—the business after the dream; and that, in the case of literature, means the work of the publisher.

There is a temptation, may be even an excuse, to reflect like this, when an English publishing

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house is two hundred years old and more. That is a long time to look back upon, a fruitful time to consider, a time with its lessons for the future.

Well, the house of Longmans was founded in the year 1724, so that it has celebrated its second centenary. Nobody knows the precise day, or week, or month of 1724 in which it was founded, because no papers which would settle the matter exist. That circumstance, when you think about it, almost adds to the interest of the event, because it gently shrouds it in a small veil of mystery.

Another thing, not less curious but quite definite in knowledge, is that the house of Longmans has stood on the same spot in London ever since it came into existence. Do you know Paternoster Row? Perhaps by name only. If so, you need directions.

Of course you know St. Paul's Cathedral at the top of Ludgate Hill, and if you will suppose yourself there we shall soon find Paternoster Row—the “Row,” as it is called in the book trade, a name in which, in another sense, it has a West-end competitor. For is Rotten Row, where great folk and some others ride, in Hyde Park, not also called “The Row”?

Thus London has two “Rows”; but it is

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only in Paternoster Row, running along the far side of St. Paul's Churchyard, with big shops now dividing them, that you will find the house of Longmans. It is almost at the corner of Paternoster Row nearest to Ludgate Hill, but not quite, because there is one earlier door, that of the Blackwoods, who are among our three oldest publishers, the others being the Longmans, oldest of all, and the Murrays.

The air of publishing is still all hereabout, just as it was long ago, when the "Row" stood for the whole book world. But modern publishers are more numerous than those who blazed the track for them when English literature was young. Then a few were in St. Paul's Churchyard itself, certainly John Newberry, who was the pioneer of the English "juvenile" and Christmas book, and for whom even that master of authorship, Oliver Goldsmith, wrote. Now our publishers, partly for want of room in the "Row," partly because there has been a general westward tendency in London, have pitched their caravans at many points between St. Paul's and Oxford Street. The Longmans hold on where they began two hundred years ago, and they would search far to find a "better hole," as Bairnsfather's well-remembered hero would have said during the war.

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A certain Thomas Longman was born in the historic city of Bristol as long ago as 1699. Bristol is rich in the spirit of adventure by sea, and its Company of Merchant Venturers has a place all its own in our history. Thomas Longman found his adventure by land, for in 1716, being then seventeen, he came to London as an apprentice to John Osborne, a well-known stationer and bookseller in Lombard Street, where all the great banks were and where some of them still are.

Perhaps one is right in supposing that young Thomas was a good and faithful London apprentice in every detail, and, please remember, the City was very careful about its apprentices, asking bonds and giving guarantees. He was, however, or so it is also to be supposed, an apprentice with individuality and certainly with sentiment. For he won the heart of his master's daughter, and eventually was happily married to her. Ah, yes ; you can have romance in publishing, as well as publish romances.

There is an old saying, familiar to young men who qualify for the English Bar, and it is "Marry a solicitor's daughter." The plain teaching here is a quick way to the briefs which solicitors have to give, and so there is a sort of impeachment implied, as if one said, "Oh, you married a solicitor's daughter, did you ?"

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Where the legal profession is concerned, we are apt to be cynical, but where it is a question of young people and a bookshop, the whole situation is different. Why should not Tom Longman from Bristol and Miss Osborne of Lombard Street, have fallen in love with each other and lived happily ever after? There was no reason at all, and probably old John Osborne was delighted with his apprentice, and more than delighted to have him for a son-in-law.

You see, daughters will go sweetheating, and they will even get married. Why turn away an admirable sweetheart and husband when Providence introduced him? It was lovely that the house of Longmans should begin in romance, for since then it has often handled the romances of literature, as those of Sir Rider Haggard.

You will, when you were youthful, have read one or other, or all, the fairy-books which Andrew Lang—"the Andra' wi' the brindled hair" of Stevenson—made for the Longmans. One of the series was called 'The Book of Princes and Princesses,' and it was published in the year 1908 with knightly and girlish pictures and a prophetic dedication of extraordinary happiness.

If you have an old copy of 'The Book of Princes and Princesses,' look it up, and you will find it dedicated to "Elizabeth Angela Margaret

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Bowes-Lyon." If you have a new copy you will instantly realize that this was the little Scottish girl who is now Her Royal Highness the Duchess of York. Talk of romance being dead ! Not at all, for what more charming, what more real romance could you have than this ?

Most likely Thomas Longman was still sweetheating, not husbanding, though we do not definitely know either way, when he bought the book business of William Taylor, the publisher of Daniel Defoe's 'Robinson Crusoe.' Its address was at the signs of the Ship and the Black Swan, for in days when comparatively few people could read, houses of business were known by the signs they showed. Out of the profits which he made on 'Robinson Crusoe,' William Taylor had bought two book shops, and their several emblems—a ship and black swan—are still used by the Longmans, though no longer for the old reason.

Quite likely Thomas Longman was enabled to find the price of his purchase, only £2,282 9s. 6d., by the graciousness of the good fellow who became, or already was, his father-in-law. Anyhow, John Osborne joined Thomas at Paternoster Row, and they soon made themselves felt in London's bookland.

Anyone familiar with the story of English

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publishing does not need to be told that it was a very different bookland from ours of to-day. One of its ways was the issuing of books with several imprints on them, as for instance, Walter Scott's novels, which bore the names not only of Constable, but of other houses.

The idea was twofold : to limit liability where a considerable risk was being undertaken, and to give a book the wider circulation which more than one organization would bring it. The system gradually died out as English publishing evolved large modern ways, but it survives to-day in the case of collected editions of an author like Robert Louis Stevenson. It has, in fact, to survive, because when you begin to collect the writings of an author of our time, you almost certainly find that they have been issued by various publishers, who have all to come in on the collected edition, although they may not all have a responsibility for it.

Thomas Longman took a considerable share in Samuel Johnson's famous 'Dictionary,' and never regretted it, though, indeed, he only survived the appearance of that much delayed work by two months. He died in 1755, and Thomas Longman the second—for the Christian name has always been in the Longman family—was his nephew, whom he had trained in books.

Thomas II was as notable, in his way, as John Murray II, "Byron's Murray," because he developed his inheritance on bold, distinctive lines. For one thing he acquired the copyright of Lindley Murray's 'English Grammar,' a work which long stood for whatever was correct in the writing of our language. For another thing, he issued a new edition of Ephraim Chambers' 'Cyclopædia,' under the editorship of Abraham Rees. Still more important, he gave the world the works of Tom Moore, the Irish poet. Before a word of 'Lalla Rookh' was written, Longman offered Moore £3,000 for the poem, and it at once had a great success.

It is not necessarily the badge of a great publisher that he should pay a great price for a book, but when a man is willing, especially in a literary way, to back his opinion handsomely, it may be taken that he has the combination of knowledge and instinct which goes far in publishing. The virtue of the old publishers was that when they had found the right authors they held on to them like brothers. To-day, when the literary agent is so active a figure in the commerce of manuscripts, a faithfulness unto death, as between author and publisher, is more difficult, and this accounts for the constant urgency to discover

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new authors of talent, if not of genius, for genius is rare.

Thomas Longman III knew Sir Walter Scott, and he visited him, if one reflects rightly, at Abbotsford, by the Tweed. In 1802 he bought the copyright of Scott's 'Border Minstrelsy,' an anthology which, even now, has not exhausted its fame. More individual to Scott, because his own, and not merely an anthology, was 'The Lay of the Last Minstrel,' and the third Longman co-operated with Scott in its publication, the author standing in on the profit-sharing system.

That is a system which has almost disappeared from modern publishing, though one hears of it now and then. Broadly it came to this, that the production cost of a work was first met, and that whatever more it earned was divided in agreed proportions between the author and his publisher.

Mostly, at the present time, authors are paid royalties on the copies of a book sold, with an advance, often very large, on account of those royalties. Occasionally a writer sells a book outright for a given sum, but that is never a good plan, because he loses all control of his writing and probably makes no more out of it than if he had published on a royalty basis. The advantage, such as it is, is that he gets his money

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at once, and the pursuit of literature is so precarious a thing that this may sometimes be necessary.

There is an interesting footnote to the history of Scott's 'Lay of the Last Minstrel,' for when the first edition had sold out Longman offered him £500 for the copyright of the work. The offer was accepted and, as Scott set down, the publishers afterwards "added £100 in their own unsolicited kindness. It was," he went on, "handsomely given to supply the loss of a fine horse which broke down suddenly while the author was riding with one of the worthy publishers."

We have there a human touch often pleasantly present in the relationship of the Longmans and their authors, great and small. They were themselves human and kind and they found the same response ; and that touch of nature went on when, at the death of Thomas Longman III, a fourth Longman, also Thomas by Christian name, came into control, accompanied by his brother, William.

They were to have the good fortune of what may be called the Macaulay period, which began in 1842 with the appearance of a poem we all learned to recite at school, 'The Lays of Ancient Rome.' Most of us could still, perhaps, without referring to the text, recite lines of this brave

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heroic narrative, a ballad, if you so like to name it, of the chivalry of Ancient Rome.

But Macaulay when he wrote the 'Lays' seems, as an American phrase which we have adopted would put it, to have taken no great "stock" in them. He offered them as a gift to the Longmans, merely stipulating that they should be brought out in book form. That done, and an edition sold, the Longmans handed back all rights in the 'Lays' to their writer, and those rights became a valuable property.

Next there appeared a selection of the essays which Macaulay had contributed to the famous 'Edinburgh Review,' which still flourishes with the Longman imprint. The essayist was not at all confident that they had any permanent value, but, in a way, he was forced into book publication for them, because they had been "pirated" in America, meaning that some American publisher had annexed them without as much as saying, "By your leave." But, of course, the essays instantly found praise and readers, and with us to-day they are probably more read than anything else he wrote, his 'History of England' not excepted.

It is re-telling literary history to mention that the Longmans, on March 13th, 1856, gave Macaulay a cheque for £20,000 as his share

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“on account” of the profits of the third and fourth volumes of the ‘History.’ What he made altogether out of the work we do not know, but that certainly was one of the largest cheques ever paid to an English writer.

Nearer our own day Benjamin Disraeli received from the Longmans £10,000 for his novel ‘Endymion,’ and it was not by any means his best novel. As a study of manners and men it would probably not have stood the scrutiny of other Longman authors like Samuel Gardiner and James Anthony Froude. Sir George Trevelyan and Bishop Creighton were later writers at the sign of the Ship and the Black Swan, and the Dean of St. Paul’s, who lives near by, has written largely under that flag.

More, much more, might be said of our oldest publishing house, but enough has been said, first, to make its record clear, and, secondly, to illustrate the place of importance which a first-class publishing house occupies in the life and labour and progress of a nation. Do not forget to reflect on this next time you take up a book to read, because a reader sometimes overlooks an imprint, forgetting what it stands for in the past, and what it may signify in the present.

### III

## MEMORIES AND PORTRAITS



GILBERT WITHOUT SULLIVAN



## XI

### GILBERT WITHOUT SULLIVAN

**N**O music of our time has caught the true melody and humour of English life so well as the operas of Gilbert and Sullivan. They are, like ourselves, serious in that they often point morals, and, like us also, they braid those morals with a reticent, yet speaking humour. But don't they proclaim their whole English note in the verse—

“ For he is an Englishman,  
And he himself hath said it,  
And it's greatly to his credit  
That he is an Englishman.”

Some of us are old enough to have seen the Gilbert and Sullivan operas when they were produced, but the younger generation has only seen them reproduced. That being so, they, perhaps, rather take them for granted, and do not look into them as we did when they were born and we were at the birth. There is no doubt about the liking of the younger generation

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for Gilbert and Sullivan, and now there is a book which will permit a close, leisurely acquaintance with the text anyhow, for what we get, if it may be so expressed, is Gilbert without Sullivan.

Yes, the great house of Macmillan has published the text of the operas as they were written by Gilbert and introduced to the public, and a wonderful "book of words" the volume makes. We owe it to Lady Gilbert, and there is not a Gilbertite—why not coin that word?—in England who will not want it, or, failing that, want to hear all about it.

There is not much to hear, for it has no memoir of Gilbert, no introduction or notes—just what Gilbert wrote. But then he wrote such wonderful things in verse, and when one says that, one finds the secret of what to do about it all.

Go lovingly through the book and gather from it a little anthology of the "good things"; the things that linger in the minds of us who are middle-aged; the things, likewise, that fall upon the ears of our young folk like glad tidings from another generation. It is a simple plan, a happy plan, and so come along all of you.

Be it noted, bibliographically, that the first of this wonderful series of English operas, 'Trial by Jury,' was staged at the Royalty Theatre in

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1875, and that the last one, 'The Grand Duke,' saw the light at the Savoy Theatre in 1896. A quarrel between Gilbert and Sullivan lost the time that would have yielded us still more of their genius, but let us be content ; especially, with the third opera of the group, 'H.M.S. Pinafore,' where you will hear this sung by the chorus—

"We sail the ocean blue,  
And our saucy ship's a beauty ;  
We're sober men and true,  
And attentive to our duty.  
When the balls whistle free  
O'er the bright blue sea,  
We stand to our guns all day ;  
When at anchor we ride  
On the Portsmouth tide,  
We have plenty of time to play."

And this from Little Buttercup, who won all hearts and, what is more and better, held them on 'H.M.S. Pinafore'—

"For I'm called Little Buttercup—dear little Buttercup,  
Though I could never tell why,  
But still I'm called Buttercup—poor little Buttercup,  
Sweet Little Buttercup I !

I've snuff and tobaccy, and excellent jacky,  
I've scissors, and watches, and knives ;  
I've ribbons and laces to set off the faces  
Of pretty young sweethearts and wives.

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I've treacle and toffee, I've tea and I've coffee,  
Soft tommy and succulent chops ;  
I've chickens and conies, and pretty polonies,  
And excellent peppermint drops.

Then buy of your Buttercup—dear Little Buttercup ;  
Sailors should never be shy ;  
So, buy of your Buttercup—poor Little Buttercup ;  
Come, of your Buttercup buy ! ”

Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B., whom Gilbert brought from “ over the bright blue sea ” of his imagination, is now so familiar to us that he might be singing—

“ When I was a lad I served a term  
As office boy to an attorney's firm.  
I cleaned the windows and I swept the floor,  
And I polished up the handle of the big front door.  
I polished up that handle so carefullee  
That now I am Ruler of the Queen's Navee ! ”

But a whole lot of Sir Joseph Porters have not hurt the spirit of the British Navy, for—

“ A British tar is a soaring soul,  
As free as a mountain bird.  
His energetic fist should be ready to resist  
A dictatorial word.  
His nose should pant and his lip should curl,  
His cheeks should flame and his brow should furl,  
His bosom should heave and his heart should glow,  
And his fist be ever ready for a knock-down blow.”

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Next let us dip into 'The Pirates of Penzance,' a different, but not less good, not less liked opera, and hear a verse of the Sergeant's song—

"When the enterprising burglar's not a-burgling—  
    Not a-burgling,  
When the cut-throat isn't occupied in crime—  
    'Pied in crime,  
He loves to hear the little brook a-gurgling—  
    Brook a-gurgling,  
And listen to the merry village chime—  
    Village chime.  
When the coster's finished jumping on his mother—  
    On his mother,  
He loves to lie a-basking in the sun—  
    In the sun.  
Ah, take one consideration with another—  
    With another,  
The policeman's lot is not a happy one.  
When constabulary duty's to be done—  
    To be done,  
The policeman's lot is not a happy one—  
    Happy one."

Or would you wish to have a line, a verse, or more from 'Patience'? If so, from the song—

"If you are anxious to shine in the high æsthetic line as  
    a man of culture rare,  
You must get up all the germs of the transcendental  
    terms, and plant them everywhere.

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You must lie upon the daisies and discourse in novel  
phrases of your complicated state of mind,  
The meaning doesn't matter if it's only idle chatter of  
a transcendental kind.

And every one will say,  
As you walk your mystic way,  
' If this young man expresses himself in terms too deep  
for *me*,  
Why, what a very singularly deep young man this deep  
young man must be ! '

Be eloquent in praise of the very dull old days which  
have long since passed away,  
And convince 'em if you can that the reign of good  
Queen Anne was Culture's palmiest day.  
Of course you will pooh-pooh whatever's fresh and  
new, and declare it's crude and mean,  
For Art stopped short in the cultivated court of the  
Empress Josephine.

And every one will say  
As you walk your mystic way,  
' If that's not good enough for him which is good enough  
for *me*,  
Why, what a very cultivated kind of youth this kind of  
youth must be ! ' "

Gilbert was equally good at a recitation, a  
sort of diversion which was once very popular,  
but which seems to be less so nowadays, though  
it will always live ; certainly this specimen—

" Gentle Jane was good as gold,  
She always did as she was told ;

# GILBERT WITHOUT SULLIVAN

She never spoke when her mouth was full,  
Or caught bluebottles their legs to pull,  
Or spilt plum jam on her nice new frock,  
Or put white mice in the eight-day clock,  
Or vivisected her last new doll,  
Or fostered a passion for alcohol.  
And when she grew up she was given in marriage  
To a first-class earl who keeps his carriage ! ”

“ Pass on there, pass on,” the police who regulate London traffic must have said to the crowd waiting for the first night of ‘ Iolanthe.’ We also pass on, but it is to that opera and the duet of Strephon and Phyllis—

“ If we’re weak enough to tarry  
Ere we marry,  
    You and I,  
Of the feeling I inspire  
    You may tire  
    By and by.  
For peers with flowing coffers  
    Press their offers—  
    That is why  
I am sure we should not tarry  
    Ere we marry,  
    You and I !

If we’re weak enough to tarry  
Ere we marry,  
    You and I,  
With a more attractive maiden,  
    Jewel-laden,

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You may fly.  
If by chance we should be parted,  
Broken-hearted  
I should die—  
So I think we will not tarry  
Ere we marry,  
You and I.”

Next to ‘The Mikado,’ which everybody has always liked, even Japanese people when they come to London—and why shouldn’t they, if only for the duet of Nanki-Poo and Ko-Ko?—

‘The flowers that bloom in the spring,  
Tra la,  
Breathe promise of merry sunshine—  
As we merrily dance and we sing,  
Tra la,  
We welcome the hope that they bring,  
Tra la,  
Of a summer of roses and wine.  
And that’s what we mean when we say that a thing  
Is welcome as flowers that bloom in the spring  
Tra la la la la la, etc.

The flowers that bloom in the spring,  
Tra la,  
Have nothing to do with the case.  
I’ve got to take under my wing,  
Tra la,  
A most unattractive old thing,  
Tra la,  
With a caricature of a face.

## GILBERT WITHOUT SULLIVAN

And that's what I mean when I say, or I sing,  
'Oh, bother the flowers that bloom in the spring.'  
    Tra la la la la, etc."

Only one other thing more popular is there in  
'The Mikado,' and that is Ko-Ko's song, which  
was sung in every street in London, and may  
still be heard in many and unexpected places,  
for it is on the tongue and in the ears of the  
English people—

"On a tree by a river a little tom-tit  
    Sang, 'Willow, titwillow, titwillow !'  
And I said to him, 'Dicky-bird, why do you sit  
    Singing "Willow, titwillow, titwillow" ?  
Is it weakness of intellect, birdie ?' I cried,  
'Or a rather tough worm in your little inside ?'  
With a shake of his poor little head, he replied,  
    'Oh, willow, titwillow, titwillow !'

He slapped at his chest, as he sat on that bough,  
    Singing, 'Willow, titwillow, titwillow !'  
And a cold perspiration bespangled his brow,  
    Oh, willow, titwillow, titwillow !  
He sobbed and he sighed, and a gurgle he gave,  
Then he plunged himself into the billowy wave,  
And an echo arose from the suicide's grave—  
    'Oh, willow, titwillow, titwillow !'

Now I feel just as sure as I'm sure that my name  
Isn't Willow, titwillow, titwillow,  
That 'twas blighted affection that made him exclaim,  
    'Oh, willow, titwillow, titwillow !'

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And if you remain callous and obdurate, I  
Shall perish as he did, and you will know why,  
Though I probably shall not exclaim as I die,  
‘Oh, willow, titwillow, titwillow ! ’ ’

It would spoil our little Gilbert anthology to say more about it than just this : “ Why are ‘ Utopia ’ and ‘ The Grand Duke,’ which closed the Gilbert-Sullivan plays, never revived now ? ” They are not, perhaps, equal to some of the others, but they are better than most of the new entertainment which the London stages offer us to-day, and so let us call warmly for them and perhaps we may get them.

Anyhow, a salute to Gilbert and another to Sullivan, for they are inseparable brothers even in an anthology of “ Gilbert without Sullivan.”

# QUEEN VICTORIA IN HER LETTERS



## XII

### QUEEN VICTORIA IN HER LETTERS

WHERE will Queen Victoria stand in English history when the final word of assessment has been said about her if, indeed, it is ever said? She has been dead a full quarter of a century, but her name remains a household word, and through the mists of the past we can still see her little, womanly figure as she drove in London or took her walks at Balmoral, in the Scottish Highlands. She was a great Sovereign, but she was also a woman, and both things are apparent in the latest series of her 'Letters,' edited by Mr. George Earle Buckle, which Sir John Murray publishes.

Young people of to-day, who sneer at the Victorians and have their doubts about Queen Victoria, should read those 'Letters,' and, at least, they will be a change from the light novels which are so fashionable. Moreover, they contain as much romance, and it happens to be true romance, for when you get to the inside of

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history you perceive the justice of the old saying that truth is stranger than fiction.

If Queen Victoria's reign was not a romance, what was it? If she was not a heroine, what was she? It needs the frame of great events to make romance and to set a heroine, and both came to her, beginning when she was only a girl of seventeen years, and lasting until she was an old lady.

Emotion is perhaps the note of those fresh Victorian letters, which cover the period 1862-1878. One says emotion, because they practically begin after the death of the Prince Consort, at the end of 1861, and they show, for a long time to follow, the extraordinary depth of affection that had existed between the young Queen and her husband. Her diaries, and her letters written to her friend King Leopold of Belgium, or to a Minister, or to some member of her family, are full of tears, and it is hard to read them even at this time without feeling deeply for the stricken, lonely woman on the British Throne.

A New Year comes, the first New Year of her widowhood, and she sits down and tells in her diary how empty the day is, and how full of dark memories for her, while she thinks and thinks, and weeps in her heart and weeps with her eyes. Here is a passage from a letter to the Earl of

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Derby, the famous “Rupert of Debate,” written by her in 1862 :

She sees the trees budding, the days lengthen, the primroses coming out, but *she thinks* herself *still* in the month of December ! The Queen toils away from morning to night, goes out twice a day, does all she is desired to do by her physician, but she wastes and pines, and there is that within her *inmost soul* which seems to be undermining her existence ! And *how can* it be otherwise ?

Naturally enough, being only a woman, she felt the impact which the outer world made upon her sorrow, and she was prone to seek a little retirement. After a time the people began to think that they did not see enough of her, and that it would be well for her and for them if she were to appear more in public. On this she wrote, using the third person, as she did in letters which were not personal and intimate :

That the public should wish to see her she fully understands, and has *no* wish to prevent—quite the contrary ; but why this wish should be of so *unreasonable* and unfeeling a nature, as to *long* to *witness* the spectacle of a poor, broken-hearted widow, nervous and shrinking, dragged in *deep mourning*, *ALONE IN STATE* as a *Show*, where she used to go supported by her husband, to be gazed at, without delicacy of feeling, is a thing *she cannot* understand, and she never could wish her bitterest foe to be exposed to !

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Necessarily, in everything she did, there was the mixture of the Sovereign and the woman, for we are all human. She thought sorrowfully of the days that had been, of the help that the Prince Consort had been to her in her work as a Sovereign, she again heard the echoes of public opinion outside, and she wrote :

No respect is paid to my opinion now, and this helplessness almost drives me wild, and in the family his loss is more dreadfully felt than anywhere. . . .

And now this year everything that interested my Angel, and that he understood, takes place, and he is not here to help us, and to write those admirable memoranda which are Gospel now. Oh ! my fate is too, too dreadful ! If I could but go soon to him and be at rest ! . . . I hope I am gradually nearing the end of my sad and wearisome journey.

On a later date we have the almost agonizing cry, "I sometimes wish I could throw everything up and retire into private life. It is all so hateful to me without the interest my Angel gave to it ; but that would be wrong."

The Moody and Sankey Revivals of 1875 stirred the whole country, but the Queen wrote : " It would never do for *me* to go to a public place to hear them, or anything of that sort, nor, as you know, do I go to *any large public places now*." She added, and it was characteristic of her whole mind and attitude :

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But independently of that, though I am sure they are very good and sincere people, it is not the *sort* of religious performance which I like. This sensational style of excitement, like the Revivals, is not the religion which *can last*, and it is not, I think, wholesome for the mind or heart, though there may be instances where it does good.

It was said, during the later years of the Prince Consort's life, that he had become the "power behind the throne." How far that was true will always be a question for discussion, just as a still larger question will be : How would the course of history in England have gone had he lived, instead of passing away in 1861 ?

What we see in the correspondence of Queen Victoria, after his death, was the gradual emergence of her mind from any governance which he may have had over it and its development, sometimes in a stubborn, sometimes in a spontaneous way, on the lines which were characteristic of her nature. Lord Rosebery once said, "She was our second great Queen, second to Queen Elizabeth, but a far nobler character." The Archbishop of Canterbury, who also came into close touch with her, has told us that she had "an irresistible charm." He ascribed this to "a combination of absolute truthfulness and simplicity with the instinctive recognition and quiet assertion of her position as Queen." There we have a tribute

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to what perhaps was the secret alike of the Sovereign and the woman—her character. It is a secret which she shared with the first element in the whole English character, and so with the greatness of England.

You are not to look in Queen Victoria for brilliance of mind as much as for shrewdness of judgment, sureness of dignity, much common-sense, a capacity for hard work, absolute honesty of outlook and a genuine piety, and, when her heart was concerned, a charming affection. We see this motherliness in what she said about Princess Alexandra of Denmark, later to become Princess of Wales and Queen Alexandra, when there was a purpose of marriage between her and the young Prince of Wales. She spoke of her as having “such a beautiful, refined profile.” And of the betrothal she said : “The match is really quite a love match ; Bertie is extremely happy and in admiration of his very lovely bride.”

We are, as we read on, always learning something new about the Queen, for instance that she had very definite views about the members of her family in the royal sense, as apart from her attitude to them in a purely personal way. Her eldest son was, of course, called Albert Edward, and on one occasion she wrote to him :

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It was beloved Papa's wish, as well as mine, that you should be called by both when you became King, and it would be impossible for you to drop your father's. It would be monstrous. And Albert alone would not do, as there can be only one ALBERT. You will begin a new line, as much as the Tudors and Brunswicks, for it will be the Saxe-Coburg line united with the Brunswick, and the two united names will mark it, in the way we all wish, and your son will be known by the two others, as you are by Albert Edward.

We know that when Albert Edward ascended the throne, it was as King Edward, and apparently he never cared for the idea of a double-barrelled name, for in reply to his mother's letter he wrote :

Regarding the possibility of my ever filling that high position, which, God grant, may be far, very far, distant, I quite understand your wishes about my bearing my two names, although no English Sovereign has ever done so yet, and you will agree with me that it would not be pleasant to be like "Louis Napoleon," "Victor Emmanuel," "Charles Albert," etc., though no doubt there is no absolute reason why it should not be so.

Of course Queen Victoria, the woman, was clinging all the time to the affectionate memory of her lost husband, for when the present King George was born she wrote to his father King Edward :

MY DEAR BERTIE,—I fear I cannot admire the names

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you propose to give the Baby. I had hoped for some fine old name. Frederic is, however, the best of the two, and I hope you will call him so ; George only came over with the Hanoverian family. Of course, you will add Albert at the end, like your brothers, as you know we settled long ago that all dearest Papa's male English descendants should bear that name, to mark our line, just as I wish all the girls to have Victoria at the end of theirs !

Well, that wish was not to be realized in history either, for the "Baby" reigns with a single name, and it is a name honoured, not only by the British people, but throughout the world.

Queen Victoria did not like her eldest son, the Prince of Wales, to go to races, and in the year 1868, when there was a question of his visiting Ireland, she wrote to him in this sense. She regretted that he should be going at a time when there were races in Ireland, because there were people who would think he meant only to attend them. He replied, very spiritedly, that he was going as a public duty, being asked by the Government of the day to do so. It was just an incident of the visit that there happened to be races in Ireland. A year or two later, the Queen again wrote him on the subject of racing, and this was the letter :

DEAREST BERTIE,—Now that Ascot Races are approaching, I wish to repeat earnestly and seriously that

## QUEEN VICTORIA IN HER LETTERS

I trust you will (as my Uncle William IV. and aunt, and we ourselves did) confine your visit to the races to the two days Tuesday and Thursday, and not go on Wednesday and Friday, to which William IV. never went, nor did we.

If you are anxious to go on those two great days (though I should prefer your not going every year to both), there is no real objection to that, but to the other days there is. Your example can do much for good, and may do an immense deal for evil in the present day.

I hear every true and attached friend of ours expressing such anxiety that you should gather round you the really good steady and distinguished people.

It was a tradition that when King Edward was a young man, he was held down very much by his mother, and there may have been some truth in that. It is evident, however, that he could take care of himself even with her, for this was his reply to the letter about Ascot :

I fear, dear Mama, that no year goes round without your giving me a jobation on the subject of racing. You know how utterly and entirely I disapprove of what is bad about them ; and therefore I think much may be done in trying to elevate what has always been the great national sport of this country. If it was not national it would long have ceased to exist.

I am always most anxious to meet your wishes, dear Mama, in every respect, and I always regret if we are not quite *d'accord*.

But as I am past twenty-eight, and have some considerable knowledge of the world and society, you will,

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I am sure, at least trust, allow me to use my own discretion in matters of this kind ; and whatever ill-natured stories you may hear about me, I trust you will never withdraw your confidence from me till facts are proved against me. Then I am ready to submit to anything.

It would have been strange, if Queen Victoria, being come of German stock, should not have regarded that country and its people with favour. She speaks indeed, in one letter, of Germany as the country she loves best next to her own, but when it came to a question of German policy in regard to England, she was often almost anti-German.

Perhaps she was influenced in this by her eldest brilliant daughter who became the Crown Princess of Germany, and afterwards the Empress Frederick. “I cannot,” this daughter wrote to her, “do the simplest thing without its being found to be in imitation of something English, and therefore anti-Prussian.” She added caustically, “But you see there are and will be narrow-minded donkeys everywhere, and the best way, after all, is not to mind what they say—their nonsense is not worth troubling about.”

Quite clearly the Crown Princess, in a mental way, and also no doubt in the sense of affection, had a real influence on Queen Victoria. But, for all that, when there was some question of the

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betrothal of Princess Louise, afterwards Duchess of Argyll, to a German royalty, the Queen said she was “irreconcilably against any such marriage.” “Times have changed,” she wrote, “great foreign alliances are looked on as causes of trouble and anxiety, and are of no good.” She even mentioned that people in England had come to speak of German princes with matrimonial intentions towards English princesses as “German beggars,” and that distressed her.

Although she lived in comparative retirement for many years after the death of her husband, and although a throne is always a solitude, she never lost touch with English public opinion. She was sad, but she retained her remarkable gift for sizing up the character and qualities, the ways and feelings, of people whom she met. She says of Palmerston that “He has many valuable qualities, though many bad ones, and we had, God knows ! terrible trouble with him about foreign affairs. Still, as Prime Minister, he managed affairs at home well, and behaved to me well. But I never liked him, or could ever the least respect him, nor could I forget his conduct on certain occasions to my Angel.”

For Disraeli, of course, she had a high regard if not, in a queenly way, something of an affection. She says of him about his purchase of the Suez

Canal shares, that he had very large ideas and very lofty views of the position his country should hold. "His mind is so much greater, larger, and his apprehension of things great and small so much quicker than that of Mr. Gladstone."

She found Tennyson "very peculiar looking, tall, dark, with a fine head, long black flowing hair, and a beard. I told him how much I admired his glorious lines to my precious Albert and how much comfort I found in his 'In Memoriam.'" Carlyle struck her as "a strange-looking eccentric old Scotchman, who holds forth, in a drawling, melancholy voice, with a broad Scotch accent, upon Scotland and upon the utter degeneration of everything." Wagner, the great composer, was at Windsor Castle in 1877, and we find this about him in Queen Victoria's diary : "I had seen him with dearest Albert in '55, when he directed at the Philharmonic Concert. He had grown old and stout, and has a clever but not pleasing countenance."

Of literature, or art, or the sciences we do not read much in Queen Victoria's letters, possibly because she was so fully occupied with the affairs of State and the affairs of her family, that she had no time for other things. No doubt it is also true that her mind was not literary, but then

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the English character in its essence is more practical than literary, more full of action than artistry, and here Queen Victoria, although born of German blood, was, as has been already suggested, essentially English. We find her, however, very fully aware of the publication of the famous 'Greville Journal,' and we have a harsh deliverance by her on—

... the *dreadful indiscretion* and **DISGRACEFULLY bad taste** of Mr. Reeve in publishing Mr. C. Greville's scurrilous Journal, without eliminating what is very offensive and most disloyal towards the Sovereigns he served, and the Sovereigns and Princes, whose hospitality and even intimacy he enjoyed ! . . . Of George IV. he speaks in such shocking language ; really language not fit for any gentleman to use of any other gentleman or human being, still less of his Sovereign.

But enough has been said to suggest how rich the latest volumes of Queen Victoria's 'Letters' are, in their revealing of the great lady who is their central figure, the events which belonged to her time, and the people who helped her to mould that time.



KING EDWARD AS "THE PRINCE"



## XIII

### KING EDWARD AS "THE PRINCE"

IT was Disraeli who once said, "Read biography ; that is the only true history." It was Viscount Esher who said, later, "Biography deals, or it should deal, with character, with personality, leaving facts to look after themselves."

One thinks of those deliverances in relation to the first volume of Sir Sidney Lee's biography of King Edward VII. It is concerned with King Edward as Prince of Wales and with the years from his birth, November 9, 1841, to January 22, 1901. We have here distinctively, the life-story of a famous English prince, while his life-story as a famous English king, falls to the second volume of the biography.

Queen Victoria was just twenty-two when the Prince, "a wonderfully large and strong child," as she told King Leopold of Belgium, was born. So began a life which was both royal and unusual, in that the young Prince, heir-apparent to the throne of England, was no ordinary royalty who was going to be bound by red tape, however

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royal, but a very human personality. Oliver Cromwell insisted that his portraitist should not omit the wart which was a conspicuous feature on his grim visage. Equally King Edward would have asked Sir Sidney Lee to describe him as he was, to preserve him for history, not as a kind of mummy of royalty, but as a living, breathing, thinking man as well as a great monarch.

Says Sir Sidney : “ I trust that without sacrifice of candour or of any other fundamental principle of the biographer’s art, I have drawn my portrait so as to convey to the present and to future generations a signally humane, human, and many-sided personality very rare among princes.” He does not forget the little things which are so important if we are to see penetratingly, as, for instance, that the speech of the King was bilingual from babyhood. German, as well as English, was habitual in the royal nursery, and at once he took more kindly to German than to English, and he never, as those who have heard him speak will remember, quite lost traces of a German accent.

What characteristics of the young Prince of Wales came directly from his parents ? That is always a hard question. He probably had bits of his mother and bits of his father, but as somebody has well said, he was essentially and assuredly always and for ever just himself : “ It

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was, however," as Sir Sidney Lee says, "from his high-spirited, shrewd, and quick-witted mother in the early pride of Queen and wife, rather than from his grave and reserved father, that King Edward drew many traits as boy and man." He adds, "It is not easy to trace to the influence of either parent, or of any fore-father, the frank *joie de vivre*, the charm of address, the captivating *bonhomie*, the cosmopolitan touches, the sympathy with the French outlook on life, and the zeal for sport, which his nature soon developed."

That happened notwithstanding a very rigorous code of disciplinary rules which the Prince Consort furnished to the equerries "for the benefit of the Prince of Wales." It was, this code laid down, desirable for him to maintain personal relationship only with those in official attendance upon him. The purpose of their influence was to fit him to hold the position of "the first gentleman in the country." His appearance, his deportment, his dress, his manners, his conduct towards others, his power to acquit himself creditably in conversation, or whatever might be the occupation of society, were all prescribed. He had to have clothes of the best quality, well made and suitable to his rank and position, and he was to be taught the

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“frivolity and foolish vanity of dandyism.” He was also to be taught “the most scrupulous civility,” and every mark of respect tendered to him was to be acknowledged “with an appearance of goodwill and cordiality.”

It was, one sees, a pretty severe catechism for a young boy, and even for a young man, to live up to. Perhaps the Prince failed a little towards the exhortation of his parents that he should cultivate the faculty of reading. He was not a constant reader, but, on the other hand, he had a great gift for acquiring knowledge at first-hand from people he met, and what he heard he never forgot. “He had,” writes Sir Sidney Lee, “a zest for all kinds of facts, and his agile memory rarely failed him. From conversation with men of varied attainment, whom he met socially, he was soon gathering a larger mass of information than literary study could easily furnish.” For one phase of his education the Prince was sent to Edinburgh, and he came under the influence of Sir Lyon Playfair, who had a finely equipped laboratory.

On some occasion, which it would not have been easy to forget, the Professor tested his pupil’s courage beyond what most people could have borne. They were standing near a cauldron containing lead, which was boiling at white heat.

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“Has your Highness any faith in science?” asked the Professor. “Certainly,” replied the Prince. He thereupon washed the Prince’s hand thoroughly with ammonia, and then invited him to place it in the boiling metal and ladle out a portion of it. “Do you tell me to do like this?” asked the Prince. And when the Professor replied, “I do,” he instantly put his hand into the cauldron and ladled out some of the boiling metal. He suffered no injury in the process, but it was an experiment which required a stout nerve and a faithful heart.

One of the things which Sir Sidney Lee brings out clearly and fully is the extraordinary reluctance, as we should think it, of Queen Victoria to give her eldest son any kind of part in public affairs. She almost refused to let him become acquainted with the inner secrets of State affairs, although, as heir-apparent to the throne, that would surely have seemed a natural course.

Sir Sidney dwells on Queen Victoria’s “sturdy resistance to her son’s enfranchisement,” and on her “unreadiness to acknowledge his independence in well-nigh any relation of life.” It almost looks as if she was afraid he might encroach upon the Sovereignty; and while she had that attitude she was at the same time feeling the burden she insisted on carrying alone.

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The Prince himself was bent, from the beginning, on supplementing the political information which came fitfully from his friends and acquaintances. The only way in which this could be done was by direct and regular access to official papers and dispatches. Even so, it took a long time, and the influence of Gladstone and other statesmen to reach the desired end, which came ultimately on the initiative of the Prince's personal friend Lord Rosebery, when that nobleman was Foreign Secretary in Gladstone's third ministry.

Without Queen Victoria's specific authority he caused the Foreign Office dispatches to be forwarded direct to the Prince in one of the red letter-boxes which were habitually circulating among ministers.

“The boxes,” writes Sir Sidney Lee, “were of two kinds, graded according to the confidential nature of their contents. The most secret documents were enclosed with others in boxes, keys to which were alone in the hands of the Sovereign, the Prime Minister, and the heads of the Foreign Office. The second class of box had another kind of key known as ‘the Cabinet key,’ which was in possession of all Ministers and their private secretaries.” Lord Rosebery accorded the Prince the most exclusive

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right of making over to him the special gold key (of the first class) which had belonged to the Prince Consort, and which was discovered to be lying forgotten in the Foreign Office.

After this Queen Victoria was disinclined to continue the strife, and so King Edward, as Prince of Wales, came into his own in the sense of having knowledge of State affairs—and the handling of them. He had, of course, long been a leading influence in English society, and personally, as apart from official affairs, he had also been a constant impulse and authority. "Recommendations," says Sir Sidney Lee, "for honours and appointments streamed incessantly from the Prince's pen or lips. His importunities ranged over a wide field. They concerned not only the most dignified offices of State, and places in the great orders of chivalry, but also posts and honours of comparative humility. The *personnel* of the diplomatic corps through all ranks was always a theme which moved him to fertile suggestions."

Sometimes, perhaps, the Prince's judgment was not perfect, as when he took the side of his kinsman, the Duke of Cambridge, in resisting Lord Wolseley's advocacy of sweeping army reforms. He was discriminating in his attitude

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towards the laws of etiquette, ignoring many which conflicted with his own ideas. Thus he frequently made use of hired cabs in going about London. He introduced the society practice of smoking immediately after dinner, and defied the ancient social prohibitions against tobacco. "Wherever," remarks Sir Sidney Lee, "he found himself, he gave a pleasant impression of sincerity and candour—qualities which were reckoned rare among princes."

His sincerity and his candour were at the disposal of Kaiser William of Germany, but they were not always acceptable to that fallen monarch. "If only," wrote the Prince of Wales to Sir Frank Lascelles in 1898, "the son could see more of his mother and could get under her influence, how different everything would be, and I am sure he would be far happier himself." For the rest, "All his English relations wish him well and desire to be on the best of terms with him. But they will not stand being misrepresented or having things said about them which are not true. *Violà tout!* The whole matter rests in the German Emperor's hands." With that we have the enlightening remark that "the Kaiser saw in the Prince of Wales, both while Heir-Apparent and while King, the most formidable rival to the place of predomi-

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nance which his magnified self-consciousness led him to claim in the world."

Shall we take one instance, a rather dramatic one, of a correspondence between the Prince of Wales and Kaiser William? "I am afraid," wrote the Prince at the time of the South African War, in reply to a communication from his German nephew, "I am unable to share your opinions . . . in which you liken our conflict with the Boers to our cricket matches with the Australians, in which the latter were victorious and we accepted our defeat." Here was a direct invitation to an explanation, and perhaps to an apology.

"My last paragraph," answered the Kaiser, "seems to have given you some umbrage. But I think I can easily dispel your doubts about it! The allusion to football and cricket matches were to show that I do not belong to those people who, when the British Army suffers reverses, or is unable at a given time to master the enemy, then immediately cry out that British prestige is in danger or lost! Forsooth! Great Britain has bravely fought for and lost the whole of North America against France and the rebels, and yet has become the greatest Power in the world! Because her fleet remained unimpaired, and by this the command of the sea! As long

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as you keep your fleet in good fighting trim, and as long as it is looked upon as the first and feared as invincible, I don't care a fiddlestick for a few lost fights in Africa."

Perhaps, but, anyhow, Albert Edward, Prince of Wales and William II, Emperor of Germany, were personalities who dwelt in different atmospheres, and they would never have been found in sympathy, though they might have had to agree, because even princes and kings are the subjects of their offices.

# A GENTLEMAN OF ENGLAND



## XIV

### A GENTLEMAN OF ENGLAND

“**O**NE by one the stars are extinguished,” George Wyndham wrote, when he heard of the death of William Morris. He was a man on the other side of the world of thought from Wyndham, but he was also a poet and a dreamer and there was that double stairway between them. It is characteristic of all large souls that they manage to get into contact and into sympathy with each other, whatever difficulties may lie between.

One of William Morris’s friends was Mr. G. W. Mackail, the well-known, veteran man of letters, and he is joint-author of the ‘Life and Letters of George Wyndham,’ a recent Hutchinson book singularly rich in a personal story, and in lights upon current history, literary and political. Mr. Mackail writes the memoir of Wyndham, and he says in it that: “He gave admiration and love largely and freely; he received them back in full measure and with equal simplicity.” That was very true of George

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Wyndham, of whom we have altogether a most full account, including many, many letters edited by his brother, Colonel Guy Wyndham.

Those who knew George Wyndham personally saluted him as a great English gentleman. He came of an old family, he had various strains of blood in him, Irish, Scotch and French as well as English, and there was an expression in his temperament and in his gifts of this mixed inheritance. One of his forbears was Lord Edward Fitzgerald, the Irish patriot, and it used to please him, especially when he was Chief Secretary for Ireland, to be called a Geraldine. Of his inheritance by blood, by temperament, and by atmosphere, he was very conscious, and all the elements were, whether consciously or unconsciously, active in his gifted and engaging personality.

Wyndham was typically English in his love of his family and the circle—including his son, later killed in the war—which made that family. We find, in one of his letters, how concerned he was when young Percy had a riding accident and fractured his thigh. It was an accident which opened up all sorts of possibility, but happily ended well. We have the father and son walking about at Saighton Grange, in Cheshire, and noticing the chestnut leaves turning yellow. Said

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the father : "And in the winter they will all be gone." Said the boy : "Yes ; and you don't see many lying on the ground. They go up somewhere. I don't know where, do you ?"

"I think," adds the father in that letter, "he was trying to fit the leaves into the scheme of metamorphoses, that perpetual rebirth which is at present the region to which he adheres. The leaves, doubtless, go up somewhere and come down again to have another good time just as the soul does in his opinion."

We see George Wyndham equally sympathetic, equally understanding, towards another little boy, the son of his sister, Pamela, then Lady Glenconner and now Lady Grey. This was Edward William Tennant, who likewise was killed in the war, and whose pet name was "Bim." He had written a poem, for he wrote much good verse, and it had delighted George Wyndham, and he said so, adding as an uncle : "Never instigate him. If he writes that now, leave him alone. Encourage him to ride and sail a boat or shoot birds. His brain will dart out only too soon. Muffle it in hardy fatigue." Charming pictures, are they not, of English family life, because we are fortunate in this that, even when our public men are eminent in affairs, they are still more important as pillars of their families.

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Fatherhood is a tremendous and beautiful English institution, only less beautiful than English motherhood, and when George Wyndham's son thought of getting married, he wrote to his father announcing as much in the words : "Here is rather a sudden shock for you, but it is all right." It was a shock and it was all right. "But," wrote Wyndham, "I have no aptitude for playing the part of the heavy father. Love is love even between a young guardsman and a maid of twenty years. I must provide gladly for their bower of bliss and, I hope, a nursery to follow."

There we have the sentimental, personal side of a man who, if he had not died in his forties, might have been Prime Minister of England, although he always felt that, as partly a politician and partly a man of letters, he was dividing his energies and might never arrive at the supreme post in either sphere. He loved his library and wrote about it like this :

" Long rows of books in figured backs  
Of gleaming leather dimly lit ;  
A ticking clock whose soft attacks  
Upon the silence deepen it ;

" No other sound in all the house  
But the low fluttering of the fire  
To stab the stillness and arouse  
The ghosts of anger or desire."

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Nobody could have written a poem beginning like that who was not at heart a bookman, and George Wyndham was a great and various bookman. He had great and various bookmen as friends, among them Henley, who, apparently, had hopes of becoming Poet Laureate, although at the time it was Alfred Austin who was appointed to the place. The bookman in Wyndham is clearly seen when he picks out from Henley's writings phrases and lines which, he says, will live in English, as, for instance, "It's only pretty Fanny's way," and "Where's Troy?" and "Where's the maypole in the Strand?"

We have him discoursing on style, and he had himself a very distinctive, characteristic and beautiful style. "Style," he says, "gives charm, surprise, colour, but its greatest gift is brevity. . . . All the masters of style have found the dodge of saying exactly what they mean in the fewest words. That is why it is said of Montaigne, if you prick his sentences, they bleed. That is why of others we say that their style reminds us of balls of worsted."

Nobody ever charged George Wyndham with writing like a bundle of worsted, for he knew how to use words and, even more important, he knew how to leave words out, for that is a great secret of style—to use the right word and

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then to stop. A good friend of his with a fine style was Wilfrid Blunt, who, at Crabbet Park, a sweet corner of England, pursued literature as well as bred Arab horses. There was a club there called the Crabbet Club, of which the members, all Wilfrid Blunt's friends, wrote sonnets and made sham orations. The rules were secret, but Wyndham tells us that "any one becoming a Cabinet minister or a bishop ceased to be a member." Young Radicals and Tories, amateurs of poetry and manly sports, all met together at Crabbet Park, and Wilfrid Blunt, as the president, presided at a dinner in the costume of an Arab sheik, and produced sonnets and shrewd observations on men and Nature. He was another man of quality, and talent certainly, if not genius, who scattered his mental riches, and so never arrived at as high a place as he could have adorned.

"The woods," wrote George Wyndham, of Crabbet Park, "grow up, in virginal unconsciousness of the axe, to the very door. On one side a wilderness sown with desert plants and dotted with wind-sown English bushes ; on the other a Sussex paddock with Arab-bred mares and their foals ; below, in the hollow, a pond full of trout in which the swans sleep and swim lazily through the day. The house is overgrown

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with June roses, and the lawns, after dark, are very silent and conducive to the complete and satisfactory solution of all problems, moral and æsthetic, by the active brains of young and uninstructed men pacing in the moonlight."

Any of us would have wanted to belong to such an intellectual circle as the Crabbet Club, and one wonders if George Wyndham ever took his friends Dr. Jameson or Cecil Rhodes to it. We have the appreciation of "Dr. Jim" that he was "A most impressive and charming personality. Not, as I feared from some of the pictures and from his action, as one piecing it together, a fanatic or exalted enthusiast, but a kind, strong, frank, clever man with wide-open clear eyes and the nostrils of a race-horse." Of Cecil Rhodes we have most light in an amusing story, very characteristic of that "Empire builder," who could be laughable when he was not always conscious of it.

He was staying in a London hotel, and he asked George Wyndham to have breakfast with him. When he arrived he found that Rhodes, who had been for a morning ride, was dressing. "He was," he chronicles, "shy, but unconventional always, so he suddenly walked in from his room in a shirt, his face lathered all over, a shaving-brush in one hand and a razor in

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the other. With these precautions against any physical exhibition of gratitude he said abruptly in his high voice : ‘ Wyndham, I can’t embrace you, but you know what I mean ? ’ ” That was almost as eloquent as if he had embraced his visitor, and it showed a deep regard on the part of a man who did not wear his heart on his sleeve, though his friends always said he had a very large heart.

Troops of friends accompanied George Wyndham through the story of his life, and at the end of it they were all sorry and disappointed, because while he had achieved much, they felt that there was still more ahead of him. We meet him towards the end, which came suddenly in France, walking and dining in the Bois de Boulogne. He knew France, and loved the Bois which means so much to Paris, and he had had a quiet, simple, reflective dinner there and he chats about it. “ No Jew was there,” he says. “ No American. No Englishman but myself. The French were dining under a sapphire sky by an old willow-tree, a fountain, and a nymph in bronze. I had struck an oasis of civilization. . . . The service was traditional. One man, human and experienced, took the order and reminded me that I had forgotten the asparagus. Another man set the meats before me. Both rejoiced in my

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content and took their tips in the spirit of gentlemen knighted on the field of battle."

The letter where one reads that was written on the fourth of June, 1913, and there was one more letter to the folk at home. It also was spiritual and beautiful, full of love and grace, and on its heels the remains of George Wyndham, "serene and peaceful as if he were asleep," were brought home to rest in the soil of England, which he so much loved. And his epitaph? Perhaps it might be two lines which are somewhere in the 'Life and Letters':

"A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight swell  
On some dark shore, just seen that it was rich."



LADIES OF QUALITY



## XV

### LADIES OF QUALITY

IT would not, perhaps, be too much to say that most of the autobiographies of the future will be by women. One means both life-stories, told by those who have lived them, and reminiscences, largely of others, because the word autobiography has this note of spaciousness. Some of the most sensational autobiographies of the past have come from the pens of women, but they were written largely because they were meant to be sensational. Now the interesting woman has found the way to write quite naturally about herself or others, and the result we see in the current lists of the London publishers.

Have you read *Walburga*, Lady Paget's book, 'In My Tower,' a reference to a pleasant mansion, not far from Florence, where she made her home for years. It is rich in anecdote and stories of English and Continental life, for Lady Paget's husband was a distinguished figure in the British Diplomatic Service, and she, herself, has been a "good mixer," as the

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Americans say, though the phrase is most ordinary for so charming a woman. Let us see just how charming and diverting a memoirist she can be.

She speaks of meeting, in the early days of his career, "Mr. Haldane, a clever, understanding M.P. lawyer." She adds, what will amuse Lord Haldane's friends to-day, that he "converses in epigrams and aphorisms."

Or we have a word about Miss Marie Corelli, the novelist, visiting Florence. "She came," says Lady Paget, "to lunch with us in clouds of pink flowered muslins, and her fair curls arranged in pet lamb fashion. She is short and plump and sprightly."

Or, again, Mr. Arthur Balfour, now Earl Balfour, whose 'Notes on the Foundations of Belief' Lady Paget had been reading, and of which she says, "Most of it is difficult to grasp and very abstruse." She adds, "It is a kind of spiritual walking on a tight-rope which he has indulged in, mostly when he was staying in country houses, and specially whilst sitting at table during tea-time. . . ."

Alfred Austin, the Poet Laureate, came within Lady Paget's circle while she was at Florence, where she met him with his wife, "he very much draped in the folds of his Laureatic mantle, and

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she has much sense of humour. She speaks amusingly about his little ways."

It was at Florence also that Lady Paget knew that strange, gifted creature "Ouida," the novelist. On one occasion she was received by her in a "draggled, white night-gown, trimmed with lace, and a black cape." Then she had a letter from "Ouida" saying, "I ought not to have taken the Torre di Bellosguardo, as I should spoil it and drive away the owls from the roof." Lady Paget was too well bred to bother about such a characteristic expression of irritation from "Ouida," who, when she was offered a Civil Service pension, angrily refused it because she had to state her age. Not very long after this she became almost blind, and was found starving in a fisherman's cottage at Viarreggio. The pension was then forced upon her, but it was too late, for in a few weeks she died. It is a leap from "Ouida" to Queen Victoria, but we take it easily when Lady Paget remarks of "Monty Corry," Beaconsfield's famous private secretary, that Queen Victoria "loves and trusts him and is continually sending for him."

She met the Queen as long ago as the year 1858, when she was thirty-nine and the future ambassadress was eighteen. To a girl of that age Her Majesty naturally appeared a matron,

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and "I was astonished to see her dance at the balls given in honour of her daughter's wedding. She had extraordinarily buoyant movements, and she danced well and gracefully."

Still speaking of the late 'fifties of the last century, our delightful *raconteur* tells us that, as she remembers Queen Victoria, she was very short, with drooping shoulders, as was the fashion of the day. When she entered a room or approached a person, she moved sideways with her hands crossed before her. "She was already," continues Lady Paget, "more than plump in those days, and she had a high colour. Her hands, though well formed, were red and swollen, and her feet always cold. She had a bad circulation, which sent the blood to her head, and the rooms at Windsor were kept icy."

So the windows of the Castle, even in January, stood wide open. After dinner the Queen and the young princesses would retire into a recess where there was a blazing fire. The ladies-in-waiting would stand round the walls of a pale green-and-gold room, in a half-circle, shivering and whispering. If the gentlemen did not come out soon enough from dinner, one of the maids of honour would be sent with a message to the Prince Consort. Sometimes two messages were sent, and even then the Queen was kept waiting.

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At last the Prince Consort would arrive, looking heavy and tired, and all the company would settle down to doing something of no importance for the rest of the evening.

We hear that Queen Victoria, in her early married life, always wore very short dresses and disapproved of large crinolines or anything ultra-fashionable. Her clothes were of the finest material, but were made in a very old-fashioned, plain way. She did not, apparently, have very good taste, because the colours she wore were often incongruous ; but then, good taste was exceptional at the time. Notwithstanding all this, we are assured that her carriage was “ singularly dignified and royal.”

Elizabeth, once Empress of Austria-Hungary, now rests quietly beside her husband, Franz Joseph, and her son, Rudolph, in the church of the Capucines in Vienna. Lady Paget knew her as one of the most beautiful women, not only of her day but of all days. “ Her fancy,” she writes, “ was her only master, and duty was a word that had no meaning for her.” But, with all her oddities, she had noble aspirations and she was kind to those about her. She leant to the morbid in everything, which gives the key to her admiration of Heine. But though, through her beauty and bodily prowess, she appealed to the imagina-

tion, especially of an English public, she leaves nothing but that memory behind her. At one time the excessive slimness of the Empress aroused fears that she might go into consumption. She was, therefore, ordered on a sea voyage to Madeira, and Queen Victoria lent her her own yacht. The Empress was then quite at the apex of her beauty, and she did not get sick, but, unfortunately, all her ladies and maids were ill. Thereupon she sent for the captain and asked him to brush her wonderful hair. He brushed it, and liked brushing it, and she liked him to brush it, and so, every day, it was brushed in this way until the ship got to Madeira. Surely there never was such a job for a captain before, but one judges that this particular skipper willingly counted it in with his other duties as an able seaman. Why not?

There is another recent book of memoirs, also by a lady of quality, which has very special qualities. It is entitled 'Fragments of Auld Lang Syne,' and the authoress of it is Mrs. Frank Russell, of Aden, an old family seat in Aberdeenshire. A Baillie of Dochfour in Inverness-shire, she married the Laird of Aden, Major-General Frank Russell, who was long our military attaché in Berlin. Thus her memories have a diplomatic side, like Lady Paget's, but an even more charming

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family and Scottish side. Shall we dip a little into Mrs. Russell's pages in waiting?

When Garibaldi came to London at the time he was building the New Italy, somebody said to Palmerston, "What do you mean to do with Garibaldi now you have got him?" "Oh," was the reply, "we must find him an heiress. There is Miss Burdett-Coutts; she might do for him."

Go farther back to Dr. Johnson, who, on some occasion, visited a chapel in Park Street, London, where an ancestor of Mrs. Russell's, on the maternal side, was the preacher. "I have come," said the great man, "to tell you that you preached a very good sermon, sir; an uncommonly good sermon, sir." The parson did not know, of course, at the moment, who was his visitor, but he afterwards found out, and naturally he was very pleased.

When the Duke of Kent, Queen Victoria's father, was travelling in Germany, he was accompanied by Sir James Reynett, another early connection, on the mother's side, of Mrs. Russell. He happened to pay a visit to the widowed Princess of Leiningen, and as he rode away he said, "Reynett, I have got to marry now my niece is dead." The country expected him to do this, and he thought the "little widow" whom they

had just visited would make a very good wife. "You had better," he also said, "ride back with a letter proposing," and at the next halt on their journey the letter was duly written and delivered. Thus there came a marriage which had a very important bearing on the history of the world, for nobody can doubt that the reign of Queen Victoria, the daughter of this marriage, was one of the great events of the modern world.

We are even taken back to the Battle of Culloden, for the grandfather of Mrs. Russell's father, who lived to be ninety-six, heard its guns. Nay, he saw the wounded Highlanders, when they were leaving the battle, come in to have their wounds dressed by his mother. He and his brothers climbed a hill to watch the fighting, and as the defeat of the Highlanders became evident the whole family fled to a bothy at the top of a neighbouring hill. They did not escape too soon, for the house of Dochfour was burned by the Duke of Cumberland's soldiers, who destroyed everything they could lay hands on.

We have another glimpse of history in a visit Mrs. Russell's grandfather was paying to the South of France, when, on the 5th March, 1815, Napoleon suddenly landed from Elba.

The Baillies were having a picnic, and, looking over towards Cap Antibes, a point familiar to

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every visitor to the Riviera, they saw some small sailing-vessels, which seemed to be making an "unusual stir on that quiet coast." They watched them through opera-glasses and wondered what was happening. They discovered, on their return to Nice a few hours later, that the whole town was in an uproar, and there were shouts : "Napoleon has returned!" "The Emperor is back!" "Vive l'Empereur!"

During this exciting afternoon, Baillie of Dochfour was introduced to the then reigning Prince of Monaco, who was "fluttering with outraged dignity" after a meeting he had had with Napoleon. "I had," he described it, "driven as far as Golf Juan on my way home to Monaco, when my carriage was suddenly stopped and my post-horses forcibly taken away. When I asked what was meant by treating a reigning prince in such an unceremonious manner, I was told that Napoleon required the horses. When I protested and insisted on seeing Napoleon myself, I was shown into his presence."

It was a chilly morning, and Napoleon was trying to warm his hands at a small fire of olive-wood branches. The Prince of Monaco found him in a very bad temper and kicking at the logs with his feet. For some minutes he did not speak, and then he said rather abruptly and harshly :

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“Where do you go ?” “Sire,” was the reply, “I go to my home,” pointing to Monaco. “And I also,” rejoined Napoleon, pointing towards Paris. He did not vouchsafe another word, but turned on his heel and moved away. The poor prince’s post-horses were not returned, and he had to walk to Nice on foot, a distance which, he complained, was a long twelve miles.

Mrs. Russell’s father, like Sir Walter Scott, was inclined to defend George IV. He held that there was a deal of good in this much vilified monarch, and that, in deciding against him, posterity was too much influenced by the lampoonists and caricaturists of the day. That introduces us to a Walter Scott incident, which took place while he was in Naples trying to recover the health that never came back to him. He was an old man, he had lived a very hard writing life, and perhaps he knew himself that he would never write any more ‘Marmions’ or any more ‘Waverleys.’

It happened that while the Scotts were at Naples they were bothered by a Russian lady whom they did not appreciate. She spent most of her time worrying Scott to write verses in her album. He shook his head sadly, and said that his writing days were over ; but she would take no refusal. One evening, when the younger

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members of the party were all amusing themselves, they noticed that he was scribbling on a piece of paper. Later he appeared with some verses he had written, and handing them over to Miss Scott he said :

“ There, Annie, are some verses for your Russian friend.”

“ Friend ! ” said Miss Scott. “ She is no friend of mine. Tiresome woman. How could you be bothered with her ? ”

“ My dear,” replied Sir Walter, “ when one is old and good for nothing, one can at least be good-natured.”

“ What on earth are we to do,” said Miss Scott—“ the Russian bore left Naples by the early coach this morning, and I don’t know her address and don’t wish to know it.”

At the end, the verses were given to Mrs. Russell’s father, who happened to be in Naples, and they are now in her possession, surely a very exquisite relic of one of the greatest British writers. They are, she remarks, undoubtedly the last lines Sir Walter ever wrote, for he left Naples the next day, and on his arrival at Rome he had the seizure from which he never recovered.

Will this posthumous Scott poem ever be printed ? It is written on a large sheet of paper

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in Scott's clear, characteristic hand, runs to nearly thirty lines, and is in his unmistakable "Marmion" style. Who would not like to read it? For—

"There is no frigate like a book  
To take us miles away,  
Nor any coursers like a page  
Of prancing poetry."



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MILNE

PAGES IN WAITNG

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